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**Decentralisation, Collaboration and Diversity in Social  
Insurance Benefit Delivery in Thailand**

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PhD

The University of Edinburgh

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## **Statement of Authorship**

I am the sole author of this thesis. It is all my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Signed:

Chatthip Chaichakan

Dated:

## **Abstract**

This research provides a Thai case-study of social insurance benefit delivery (SIBD) and of the tension between the international norm of a standardized and centralised system and recent trends to diversified and locally responsive public service delivery. Thailand has been chosen as an example of decentralised and diversified SIBD since regional variation of its SIBD seemingly occurred after a more general decentralisation policy had been introduced in the country. Thus, this research examines the extent to which SIBD diversity exists in the way that decentralisation has been implemented in Thailand since the late 1990s. Built upon four theoretical perspectives (social insurance, collaborative public management, decentralisation, and inter-organisational relations) the conceptual framework uses three models of SIBD diversification (Weberian, customer-oriented, and strategic) to explain diversified patterns of SIBD in Thailand.

The thesis is a multi-site case study research. Out of 76 Thai provinces, four provinces in the North were purposively selected to typify three socio-economic areas: commercial (Chiang Mai), industrial (Lamphun), and agricultural (Phrae, Nan). Employing qualitative methodology, a mixed method of data collection was undertaken with two major methods: interview with key actors (e.g. government officials, employers, employees) and documentary research (e.g. official reports, minutes of meetings, government plans and strategies). Further, in addition to analyzing content in texts (transcripts, documents), positional mappings and coding were carried out to illustrate the broad patterns of the phenomena studied.

This research found that not only decentralisation but also inter-organisational collaboration has impacts on SIBD diversification. Political variables such as national and provincial elites were also investigated but they are evidently not predictors of the diversity. Indeed, decentralisation is a key factor of SIBD diversity which is evident in two of the provinces studied (Chiang Mai, Phrae). In Chiang Mai, being only slightly decentralised, SIBD rigidly follows national norms and routine

patterns. In contrast, in Phrae, being highly decentralised, SIBD is highly diversified, especially because of an innovative SIBD project operating in the province. However, this research also finds that collaboration is a key factor of SIBD diversity in the other two provinces (Lamphun, Nan). In Nan, although similar to Chiang Mai with regard to low decentralisation, SIBD has become highly diversified as original and innovative SIBD projects in the province evidently involve several collaborative activities. In Lamphun, while being moderately decentralised, SIBD is just slightly diversified, in congruence with the low level of collaboration in the province. This research concludes that even in uniform systems SIBD can be very different reflecting the variable impact of local initiatives which are evidently results of decentralisation and/or collaboration.

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Apologies if errors and mistakes remain in this dissertation. They are my sole responsibilities.

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## Acronyms

CLO	The Phrae SSRO's Cooperation with Local Organisations Project
EO	Employment Office
GCS	Government Counter Service
GG	Good Governance
HCP	Health Care Provider
IOR	Inter-organisational relation
IPA	Integrative Provincial Administration policy
LAO	Local Administration Office
LO	Labour Office
LoA	Local administration
LSDC	Labour Skill Development Centre
LWPO	Labour Welfare and Protection Office
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MoL	Ministry of Labour
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MROSSO	Ministerial Regulation on Organisation of Social Security Office
NPM	New Public Management
PH	Provincial Hospital
PHO	Public Health Office
PSSS	Provincial Subcommittee of Social Security
ProA	Provincial administration
P&F	The Nan SSRO's Thinking Partners and Friends of Insured Person Project
SAO	Subdistrict Administrative Organisation
SIA	Social insurance administration
SIB	Social Insurance Benefit
SIBD	Social Insurance Benefit Delivery
SSA	Social Security Act
SSC	Social Security Committee
SSF	Social Security Fund
SSO	Social Security Office
SSRO	Social Security Regional Office

## Timeline

Year	Event
1990	Enactment of the Social Security Act and establishment of the Social Security Office (SSO)
1991	Military coup
1992	Political turmoil “Bloody May”
1995	The SSO was selected as a pilot case of Promoting Efficiency in Public Service Delivery scheme
1997	Tom Yum Kung economic crisis
	Amendment of the Constitution
1999	Declaration of Plan and Process of Decentralisation
2001	Thaksin Shinawatra won the general election and became the Prime Minister
2003	Integrated Provincial Administration policy
	Enactment of the Decree of Good Governance
2006	Military coup in September and Thaksin was ousted from the premiership
2007	The Lamphun SSRO’s participation in the GCS project
2008	The Nan SSRO’s P&F project started
	Current Nan SSRO’s chief arrived
2008	Abhisit Vejjajiva was appointed Prime Minister
2009	The P&F project was listed in the SSO’s annual plan
	Current Lamphun SSRO’s chief was relocated from the Chiang Mai office
2010	The Phrae SSRO’s CLO project started
	Current Phrae SSRO’s chief arrived
	The Chiang Mai SSRO proposed a project for the Governor’s budget
	The Nan SSRO’s Mobile branches project started
2010	The new Chiang Mai governor arrived
2010	Political turmoil ‘Savage May’ with 98 death tolls and more than 250 injuries
2011	Yingluck Shinawatra won the general election and became the Prime Minister
	A year in which the Chiang Mai SSRO was operated under the acting chief (the late 2010 – Sep 2011)
2013	Protests against the Amnesty Bill pardoning those involved in political unrests since 2004
2014	Military coup in May and Yingluck was ousted from the premiership



## Chapter 1 : Introduction

This research began as a journey to study the diversity of social insurance benefit delivery (SIBD) on the basis of two disciplines: Social Policy and Public Administration. While the former grounds the understanding of social insurance policy and institutions; the latter provides an analytical framework for administrative decentralisation, collaboration and inter-organisational analysis. Generally, social insurance administration is supposed to be centralised and standardized (ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, 1990). Also, consistency and standardization seem to be a requirement of service provision and benefit delivery in social security (Gent, 2001, p.190; R. L. Walker, 2005). These principles must be set alongside the evidence that decentralisation seemingly brings on the diversification of provision and delivery (Costa-Font, 2010; Costa-Font & et al, 2011, p.481; Oates, 1993, p.242).

In search of explanation, existing literature reasserts that decentralisation is significant to diversity within the welfare state. Alongside various terms such as ‘policy divergence (e.g. Greer, 2008)’ or ‘welfare fragmentation (e.g. Pierson, 1995)’, studies similarly emphasise the differentiation within the welfare state as a result of decentralisation. In the UK, for example, several studies suggest that devolution enables policy divergence to rise (McEwen, 2005; Parry, 2002). In Spain and Italy, it is suggested that devolution enhances diversity of social services (Costa-Font, 2010). In Scandinavia, as a response to the diversity, the debate on whether to decentralise the welfare administration is continuing (Trydbergard & Thorslund, 2010).

The explanation of where the diversity is actually derived from has rarely been elaborated. Within the limited number of diversity studies, most of them emphasise how decentralisation plays its part in the diversification process. This research takes the path of exploring the diversity in more detail. Putting decentralisation on one side, it embraces on the other side the possibility that another factor – namely,

collaboration – could be similarly influential in explaining diversity. Since it is a process in which actors make a joint decision-making to create interdependent activities, it may result in SIBD diversity. Therefore, considering that diversity is a less-explained issue of social insurance administration studies, four theoretical perspectives (social insurance, decentralisation, collaborative management, inter-organisational relations) are specified as pillars of this research (see Chapter 2).

Being aware of self-biases, this research selects Thailand as a case study not only because of the researcher's insight as a Thai but also because Thailand's social insurance administration is an interesting case. Indeed, its overall system has traditionally been centralised as regional offices usually followed central policies and had limited power of decision-making. The current structure of social insurance in Thailand dates from 1990. It is administered at two levels – national and provincial. At the national level, the Social Security Office (SSO) is a central department taking policies from the Ministry of Labour (MoL) and responsible for the day-to-day functioning of social insurance administration (SIA) in particular. It is also responsible for the administration of the Social Security Fund (SSF) together with the tripartite board (Social Security Committee: SSC). At the provincial level, the Social Security Regional Office (SSROs) is a delivery agency of social insurance benefits (SIBs) implementing the SSO's policies and situated in each of 75 provinces in Thailand<sup>1</sup>. Similarly to other countries, seven benefits of social insurance are provided in Thailand including: sickness, maternity, disability, elderly, unemployment, child allowance, death (see Appendix 1). However, being function-based, the system was designed to administer all benefits together under a single government body, the SSO.

Although Thailand's centralised and uniform social insurance administrative system is similar to other countries (e.g. UK, Japan), decentralisation in the late 1990s has made Thailand an interesting case for study. The decentralisation has diversified SIBD enabling the SSROs to experiment with initiatives and projects. This, consequently, leads to the further diversification of SIBD which is a major concern

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<sup>1</sup> There are totally 76 provinces in Thailand but Bangkok has 12 Social Security Area Offices instead of a single SSRO.

of this research. The late 1990s decentralisation affects three SIBD-related administrative spheres: social insurance administration (SIA), provincial administration (ProA), and local administration (LoA). Changes in each administration include: revised central-local control in SIA, stronger governor in ProA, and autonomous local government in LoA. These presumably catalyse SIBD diversification, but there are very few existing researches addressing this hypothesis either in theory or specifically to Thailand.

Studies of welfare policy in developing countries have been increasingly of interest among scholars. Either-or categorization is employed to understand these countries e.g. productive/protective (Rudra, 2007), informal-security/insecurity (Gough, 2004b). However, none focuses particularly on welfare administration in developing countries. Presumably, doing research on this subject might be challenging to some scholars as they may 'treat the political economies of less developed countries (LDCs) as more or less identical to one another or, at the other extreme, as nations marked by tremendous diversity' (Rudra, 2007, p.378). Or, back to the beginning, as developing countries are yet-to-be welfare states, particular concern thus goes to the design of welfare policy rather than its implementation. Therefore, this research aims to contribute to the lack of welfare administration studies in developing welfare states.

Similarly, existing literature on East Asian welfare state rarely focus on the administrative aspect of welfare delivery. Several literatures propose theoretical approaches addressing East Asian welfare states (Aspalter, 2006; Croissant, 2004; Gough, 2001; Holliday, 2000; Jones, 1990; Kurtz, 2002; Kwon, 2009; Olsson Hort & Kuhnle, 2000; Peng & Wong, 2010). Some focus particularly on the financial aspect (Asher, 1996, 2002; O'Donnell et al., 2008); some on responses to social diversity (Asher & Pathmarajah-Banna, 2002); one interestingly focuses on Southeast Asia (Ramesh & Asher, 2000). However, none of these focuses on the East Asian welfare administration which is a major focus of this research.

Many research projects and studies in the Thai language focus on social insurance system but few of them study the administration of social insurance. According to

the research database of the Ministry of Labour (MoL)<sup>2</sup>, 89 studies on the topic of social insurance policy have been completed during the period of 1999-2009. Only 10 studies contain a particular focus on implementation at the provincial level. Also, in the ThaiLis<sup>3</sup> Database, 263 research studies have been undertaken on social insurance. Briefly, they can be categorised into five subjects: history, policy-making, law, policy evaluation, and policy implementation. Again, the policy implementation topic seems to be the least popular (18 out of 263). Although there are some studies looking at policy implementation, the analytical frameworks and research findings seem to evaluate the policy (e.g. Phum, 1997; Research and Consultancy Institute., 2007) or the factors of success (e.g. Jiasakul, 2006; Rodpaimuang, 2002), rather than the implementation process.

There are also several studies in the fields of Public Administration and Political Science focusing on the political and administrative systems in Thailand. Riggs' seminal study on Thailand's bureaucratic system (1966) presents 'Prismatic Theory' which considers the Thai bureaucracy as a 'Sala Model', a formal organisational structure with informal course of actions. This study is particularly essential to those aiming to study the administration in Thailand or developing countries. Heady (1962) classifies Thailand into the 'bureaucratic elite' administrative type which means political power is largely in the hands of the civil and military bureaucracy. However, although some instances in these studies remain valid, it is necessary to review them once again because most of the explanation cannot be applied to the current situation (Ockey, 2004). The scope of each of these studies is also the Thai bureaucratic system as a whole rather than the administrative structure of a particular policy.

A qualitative research strategy was applied in this research. Three provinces – Chiang Mai, Lamphun, Phrae – in the North were originally selected to represent three different socio-economic areas – commercial, industrial, agricultural – of Thailand. Prior to the fieldwork, it was found that there was a distinctive project

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<sup>2</sup> <http://research.mol.go.th>, retrieved on March 23, 2010.

<sup>3</sup> Online database of Thai library network contains electronic resources such as theses and researches. This information is retrieved on April 1, 2010.

involving local organisations to deliver the SIBs in Phrae. In Lamphun, there was a seemingly distinctive project of SIBD in cooperation between the SSRO and the Lamphun governor. In Chiang Mai, no distinctive project was found but it was still selected because of its outstanding commercial character. Soon after the first fieldwork was finished, Nan was added to the set of cases because of the Nan SSRO's original collaborative project<sup>4</sup>. While documents and interviews were major methods of data collection; observation was also employed as a supplement. Content analysis is applied to all texts and field notes; while positional mapping provides analytical illustrations for further discussion. Notably, selecting Thailand as a single case study, this research bears in mind that, as Aidukaite (2006, p.267) suggests, 'single nations are mostly usually viewed as hybrid cases and never considered pure representatives of any ideal typical model of the welfare state'.

## 1.1 Research Purposes

In this research, three purposes are set out which seek to: *describe*, *explain*, and *explore*. The first purpose of this research is *to describe* the administrative system of social insurance in three regards (see Chapter 5). It firstly elaborates components of social insurance – e.g. decision-makers, implementers, and structures - particularly at the sub-national level. Secondly, it attempts to illustrate SIBD system by elaborating the roles of and relations among the policy actors (actor-centred analysis). Thirdly, it aims to describe the decentralisation in social insurance administrative system. Then, the second purpose of this research is *to explain* the diversity within social insurance administration (see Chapter 6). It analyses how the diversity of SIBD has occurred. It examines the extent to which decentralisation and collaboration affects social insurance administration, particularly at provincial level, in Thailand. Lastly, the final and ultimate aim is *to explore* an analytical model of social insurance administration in order to enhance the knowledge about implementation of social insurance policy (see Chapter 7). As diversified administrative patterns are

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<sup>4</sup> This project is discovered in the first fieldwork rather than online database which was the main source of data for the fieldwork preparation.



considered as a theoretical gap in social insurance administration studies, this research aims to propose an explanatory model of the SIBD diversification pattern.

## 1.2 Research Questions

As mentioned earlier, this research focuses on diversity of SIBD, decentralisation and collaboration. It investigates the associations between, on one hand, diversity and decentralisation and, on the other hand, diversity and collaboration. First of all, two basic questions should be answered to illustrate the situation. Firstly, *‘what are the roles and relations of each policy actor in the delivery system at the provincial level?’* This basic question aims to describe social insurance administration at the provincial level. It seeks to define: who the actors are; their basic interest and responsibilities; and how they get involved in SIBD. Preliminarily, the Social Security Regional Office (SSRO) is considered as a central actor of SIBD and other actors include: the Social Security Office (SSO), provincial governor, local government, employee organisation, and employer organisation (discussed earlier in p.2). Each actor is investigated in two regards: involvement and activeness in SIBD. Secondly, *‘to what extent does diversity of SIBD exist in Thailand’s social insurance administration?’* To examine the degree of SIBD diversity in Thailand, this research compares the delivery pattern across the provinces studied to the uniform pattern which is suggested by a central agency and implemented in most provinces. It thus illustrates the uniform pattern, the SIBD pattern in each province and, finally, draws a comparison between provinces and the national norm.

A central question of this research is set as *‘Is interprovincial diversity in SIBD caused by either or both a) the decentralisation policy in recent years or b) the relationship patterns between actors at provincial level?’* Thus, two associations are to be examined under two questions below:

1. *How has the policy of decentralisation having been implemented since the late 1990s changed the roles and relations of each provincial actor in SIBD and consequently led to diversity of SIBD?*

This question seeks to clarify how decentralisation influences the delivery in each province, and how delivery varies across provinces. Answering this question could illustrate a picture of SIBD diversification in Thailand since the late 1990s (when regional offices were asked to become more autonomous and responsive to local factors). Considering the late 1990s decentralisation as institutional changes, this question clarifies how such changes reshape roles and relations of provincial actors. It draws a link between decentralisation and the changing roles and relations of SIBD actors. It explains how decentralisation has impacts on social insurance administration at the provincial level. It examines the association between decentralisation and diversity by comparing the degree of decentralisation and the degree of SIBD diversity in each province. This question will illustrate how the implementation of decentralisation policy leads to SIBD diversity.

*2. How far is the degree of SIBD diversity the result of relationship patterns, particularly collaboration, between actors at the provincial level?*

This question seeks to investigate the impacts of policy actors' relations on SIBD at the provincial level. It intends to clarify two components: inter-organisational relations and their impacts on SIBD. These relations will be analysed in terms of how an actor interact with another actor (dyadic relations); why they are interacting with each other; and, what type of their interaction is (e.g. contracting, co-ordinating, co-operating or collaborating). It further explains the extent to which collaboration exists in each case. It discusses how the degree of collaboration is related to the degree of diversity. In other words, it asks whether collaboration and diversity in the province are in positive or negative association.

### **1.3 Thesis outline**

This thesis is structured in nine chapters including this chapter as the Introduction. Then, in Chapter 2, a literature review and conceptual framework are presented. Four

theoretical approaches – social insurance, decentralisation, collaborative public management, inter-organisational relations – are reviewed as part of the conceptual framework. While existing literature suggests significant relation between decentralisation and diversity of SIBD; the process of SIBD diversification is identified as a less-explained area which this research expects to fulfil. Assuming that collaboration also impacts on diversity, Agranoff and McGuire's framework (2003) is employed as the main analytical framework of collaboration in this research. Also, the model of diversification is proposed suggesting three patterns of SIBD: Weberian, customer-oriented, and strategic.

Chapter 3 (the case of Thailand) provides justification for the country selection and background in social insurance administration in Thailand. Despite being categorised as an example of an East Asian welfare state (Gough, 2004a), Thailand has its own unique characteristics – e.g. long-time sovereignty (Midgley, 1984), boom-and-bust economy (Pasuk & Baker, 1998), two-tier democracy (Laothamatas, 1996) – which make the country an interesting case to study. Selecting Thailand as a case study of decentralisation impact on SIBD diversity may be questionable as its decentralisation remains under-developed. However, developing from existing literature, this chapter argues that decentralisation has been started and had impacts on social insurance administration in Thailand. Four impacts supposedly occur if decentralisation is implemented as planned, including: a responsive delivery agency, a flexible central department, a stronger provincial governor, and autonomous local government.

Chapter 4 (research methodology) focuses on the research design particularly sampling and selection of cases. Qualitative methodology is employed in which three data collection methods (document, interview, observation) are undertaken and two data analysis methods – content analysis, situational analysis – are applied. At the meso-level, the North is selected because of its outstanding political and social characteristics. Its four provinces are selected to represent three economic sectors: Chiang Mai (commercial), Lamphun (industrial), Phrae and Nan (both agricultural). At the macro-level, 58 respondents were selected by purposive sampling. Further, limitations and weaknesses of this research and how they would be minimised are

discussed. Also, ethical issues are discussed in accordance with the School of Social and Political Science Research Ethics Policy.

Chapter 5 (provincial actors, inter-organisational relations and the diversity of SIBD) analyses the roles and relations of actors in SIBD and the extent to which the diversity exists in each province. Firstly, it applies actor-centred analysis to discuss roles and responsibilities of social insurance actors at the provincial level. The four selected SSROs are found to be autocratic, conventional, laissez-faire, and diplomatic in their coordination style. Despite legislated responsibilities, most members of the tripartite board were likely to follow the policies of the SSRO. Local organisations involved in SIBD seem to have insignificant roles in SIBD decision-making.

Secondly, it discusses inter-organisational relations. Evidence suggests that, considering inter-organisational resource dependence, three actors – provincial governor, external office, local organisation – are influential in SIBD. It is also found that Nan is the most collaborative case while Chiang Mai is the least. Lastly, the pattern of SIBD in four provinces – Chiang Mai, Lamphun, Phrae, Nan – is analysed to identify similarities or differences compared to the uniform pattern. Evidence shows that degree of diversification varies across selected provinces in relation to the degree of the SSRO's responsiveness.

Chapter 6 (decentralisation, collaboration and diversity) aims to delineate two associations of decentralisation-diversity and collaboration-diversity. It firstly discusses the politicisation of SIBD (see Section 6.1) and argues that national politics unlikely affects SIBD. It then re-examines the four decentralisation impacts listed in Chapter 3 (see Section 6.2). It concludes that the impacts actually lead to more autonomy and resources for the SSRO. In Section 6.3, the degree of decentralisation is indicated in each selected case based on the SSRO's decentralised activities and contexts. Evidence suggests that decentralised authority is implemented to a certain extent as several actors not only acknowledge but also implement such authority. Phrae appears to be the most decentralised case and Chiang Mai is the least. Finally,

it argues that collaboration is more positively associated with SIBD diversity than decentralisation (see Section 6.4).

Chapter 7 concludes that the diversity of SIBD is a result of both the late 1990s decentralisation and collaborative management. Chiang Mai and Phrae are congruent with the theory that decentralisation is positively associated with diversity. Differently, Lamphun and Nan are the cases in which collaboration is positively associated with diversity. Further, public managers of SIBD systems, namely the SSRO chiefs, appear to be crucial to SIBD. Consistent with Agranoff and McGuire (2003), variation in public service management results from the collaborative strategy and activity performed by public managers. Finally, the model of the diversification pattern is applied to the four cases (and interpreted as somewhat Weberian in Chiang Mai; Weberian/customer-oriented in Lamphun; somewhat strategic in Phrae; and somewhat strategic in Nan). Through decentralisation and local collaboration, the diversity mostly occurs regardless of the ongoing politics at the national and provincial levels.

## **Chapter 2 : Literature Review and Conceptual Framework**

This chapter defines four key concepts of this research: social insurance, diversity, decentralisation and collaboration (see Section 2.1). It provides a conceptual framework (see Section 2.3) which is constructed through the use of four theoretical approaches: social insurance, decentralisation, collaborative public management (CPM), and inter-organisational relations (IORs) (see Section 2.2). Then, models of SIBD diversification are proposed as an analytical framework for later chapters (see Section 2.4).

### **2.1 Key definitions**

Four key concepts including social insurance, diversity (within the welfare state), decentralisation and collaboration are necessarily defined to set boundaries of the research. Some related concepts are also defined in this section but only four are considered as key concepts.

#### **2.1.1 Social insurance**

Defining social insurance has never been an easy task. The simplest way is to distinguish it from private insurance by stating that it is an insurance provided under the principle of ‘risk-pooling’ within the society rather than individual responsibility (Silburn, 1995). The more difficult issue is how to define it in relation to social security because the two concepts are sometimes used interchangeably. In general, social insurance appears to be subset of social security (e.g. Alcock, 1999; Burgess & Stern, 1991; Hills, Ditch, & Glennerster, 1994; International Labour Office., 1984). While social security is defined ‘narrowly as the provision of income maintenance services, or even as a particular type of income maintenance service (Midgley, 1984, p.81)’; social insurance is a contributory social security system involving the state, employers, and employees (Clasen, 2001; Dixon, 1999; Gent, 2001; Korpi & Palme,

1998; Midgley, 1984; Ramesh & Asher, 2000; Rogne et al., 2009; Silburn, 1995). In the US, however, social insurance seems to be a broader term while social security is restricted to functions of the Social Security Administration office (Fieldstein, 2005; Lipsky, 1991). This research thus refers to social insurance as a subset of social security which is a contributory system under the risk-pooling principle.

To clarify further, three concepts (social insurance institution, social insurance actor, social insurance administration) need to be defined. Firstly, ‘institution’ is an ambiguous concept which scholars attempt to define as rules of the game, contexts of actors, or a constitutive field (Greenwood, 2008). While the first two see institution exogenous to actors, the latter emphasises interaction between institutions and actors. This research thus keeps such ambiguity and all definitions in mind to understand institutional settings of the selected phenomenon – SIBD. More specifically, it is important to distinguish between an institution and actors by their definition and recognizes their interaction.

Furthermore, this research applies Korpi and Palme’s concept (1998) of ‘social insurance institution’ which suggests that social insurance institution can be understood under three criteria: base of entitlement, benefit level principle, and employer-employee cooperation in programme governance. Therefore, to operationalise the concept, this research broadly defines ‘social insurance institution’ as rules, contexts, and interactive field related to social insurance entitlement, principle, and programme governance. Despite the blurred area of actor-institution interaction, this research draws a clear line between social insurance institution and actors only for analytical purpose. Also, social insurance institution is defined only in order to indicate its institutional settings i.e. decentralisation, provincial administration, local administration.

Secondly, ‘actor’ is an ‘amorphous’ concept which could be ‘structures, interests, international regimes or policy networks’ (Pierre & Peters, 2000, p.7). More specifically, it is a ‘bearer[s] of rights and obligations and can perform behaviour’ which could be either individuals (i.e. natural persons) or organisations (i.e. corporate actors) (Vrooman, 2009, p.60). In this research, ‘social insurance actor’ is

referred to as an organisation, not an individual, involved in social insurance provision at either institutional or administrative level. Notably, this is not a stand-alone concept separated from institutions. Rather, as Jackson (2010) suggests, ‘actors and institutions are seen as being mutually constitutive of one another (p.63)’ as, for instance, ‘institutions are produced and reproduced by the strategic behavior of actors, even while actors are constrained by institutions (p.67)’.

Lastly, ‘social insurance administration’ has not been elaborately defined elsewhere. It has been used as a title of the governmental unit responsible for social security delivery in, for example, Iceland but it has rarely been used by scholars. Perhaps this is because, theoretically, the term ‘administration’ is outdated as it is old wine which has already come in a new bottle of management (Lynn, 2006). Indeed, ‘public management’ has been a dominant concept of public service delivery lately. It is ‘irredeemably associated with managerialism (Lynn, 2006, p.10)’ which is a somewhat normative way of studying public administration. Moreover, ‘governance’ could be another alternative term of this research as it is ‘closely associated with the analytic concept of network and related ideas (Lynn, 2006, p.11)’.

Despite its obsolescence, ‘administration’ is still employed in this research to emphasise its orientation on government activities rather than managerial tools and its focus on collaboration (see Mandell, 1999) rather than networks (see Provan & Kenis, 2008). Therefore, this research employs ‘administration’ to refer to ‘the practical management and direction of the executive department, or, of the public machinery or functions (Fairlie, 1935 cited in Lynn, 2006, p.6)’. In addition, it is related to governance which is defined as ‘patterns that emerge from governing activities of social, political and administrative actors (Kooiman, 1993, p.2)’. Therefore, ‘social insurance administration’ is broadly defined as the practical management of government agency responsible for and patterns that emerge from government activities within SIBD.



### **2.1.2 Diversity within the welfare state**

It is important to define ‘diversity’ as it is a focus of this research. Diversity can be considered either broadly or specifically. Broadly speaking, diversity is a basic concept dealing with ‘the great and growing individualization, differentiation, specialization and variety of the modern world (Kooiman, 1993, p.40)’. It consists of four aspects: social diversity, institutional diversity, micro-level governance diversity, and diversity of reality interpretation (Kooiman, 1993, pp.253-254). Also, it ‘implies qualitative and quantitative differentiation that is of similarities and differences in kind and degree (Kvist, 2006, p.167)’. In this research, diversity is thus a differentiation of social insurance benefit delivery within the welfare state that results from changing and diverse contexts. It should be emphasised that the term ‘diversity’ is selected to represent differentiation only. It neither connotes success nor failure of the delivery nor implies a positive (e.g. local flexibility) or negative meaning (e.g. territorial disparities) of the differentiation.

By positioning this research in existing literatures, it is found that diversity within the welfare state has been discussed from at least three different angles. Firstly, with the largest number of studies on this topic, diversity is seen as fragmentation of the welfare state (Boockmann et al, 2010; Champion & Bonoli, 2011; Costa-Font, 2010). As Pierson (1995) states, ‘[F]ragmented welfare state’ is a result of federalism where three variables – structure of party systems, nature of political economy, geographical distribution of minority groups – are influential. This fragmentation is considered as an arising problem of federal states where social injustice is of concern (Wilson, 2006). Secondly, in Nordic countries, the diversity is referred to as ‘local variation’ – a result of policy implementation by highly independent local authorities (Jørgensen & Lind, 1987; Trydegard & Thorslund, 2010). Although the variation was previously preferable (Jørgensen & Lind, 1987); it has recently raised the concern on regional inequality (Trydegard & Thorslund, 2010). Thirdly, in the unitary state, UK in particular, ‘policy divergence’ is the preferred term for diversity (S. Greer, 2008; McEwen, 2005; Parry, 2002). This diversity occurs after 1998 when ‘the distinctive party politics and debates of each jurisdiction have created diverse

policies and trajectories (Greer, 2008, p.2)'. It is also a concern whether it will lead to a fragmented welfare state (Bogdanor, 2007).

Interestingly, all three different perspectives share two things in common; discussion about devolved authority to sub-national governments (decentralisation) and concern over welfare fragmentation. Both are of interest in this research. Firstly, the discussion on decentralisation within the welfare state has mostly been studied in the forms of federalism (e.g. Pierson, 1995), devolution (e.g. Greer, 2008), or localization (e.g. Trydegard & Thorslund, 2010). These studies focus on institutional changes whilst this research searches for administrative changes on the ground level. Secondly, concern over welfare fragmentation is discussed in this research. It aims to reassert that difference of welfare provision within the welfare state should not necessarily be labelled as 'fragmentation'. It argues rather that such difference, hereafter referred to as 'diversity', is necessary for welfare reform. In other words, 'universal services which are capable of meeting diverse and differentiated needs (Williams, 1989, p.215)' are important. Turning the idea of fragmentation upside down, diversity within the welfare state is required in response to the modern world, and more studies should be carried out based on this perspective.

Besides, existing literature on diversity within the welfare state mostly focuses on diversified benefits or coverage rather than diversity of welfare delivery (Mares, 2000; Pierson, 1995; Trydegard & Thorslund, 2010). In other words, its focus is at the policy level not the practical level. Diversity is seen as a result of independent governments tailoring local welfare coverage and benefits in response to local needs. For example, in Germany, diversity occurs as '[I]ndividual *Länder* were allowed to raise unemployment insurance contributions if high and persistent levels of unemployment in a region caused a deficit in the insurance fund (Mares, 2000, p.237)'. To put it differently, this research focuses on the diversity of social insurance benefit delivery at the practical level. It aims to enhance the understanding of the diversity of street-level delivery in particular. In other words, it clarifies how welfare delivery is diversified at the implementation level.

Indeed, it could be argued that the diversification has been a common feature of public service delivery since 1980s when New Public Management (NPM) was introduced. As Pierre and Peters (2000, p.88), for example, indicate, ‘...many public services are becoming less standardized and the need for these services to be responsive and adapted to local needs has become more important’. Accordingly, diversity of welfare delivery may seem too trivial to be studied. However, welfare administration is a rule-bound system where discretionary welfare workers, or street-level bureaucrats, work to cope with the rigid conditions of welfare delivery (Brodkin, 1997; Lipsky, 1980). Despite the influence of NPM, welfare administration generally remains standardized and centralised under two constraints. Domestically, ‘[S]tandardized services were to be delivered across a city by agencies that, "without fear or favor," treated everyone the same (Cooper, 2004, p.402)’. Internationally, welfare administration, particularly social security, is required to meet obligations of international organisations e.g. ILO (Strang & Chang, 1993, p.242). Thus, understanding welfare delivery requires a particular framework different from the one for general public service delivery.

Despite the two-layer constraints, this study argues that, once decentralisation has been implemented, diversity of welfare delivery could happen in response to local needs. Indeed, several studies have already been related to this topic. Costa-Font’s (2010) framework, for example, analyses institutional and political determinants of welfare diversity in Spain and Italy. However, his work focuses on the national level presenting the state as one entity and overlooks the cause and result of diversity at the local/regional level. In contrast, this research is an attempt to clarify the diversity of welfare policy implementation at the sub-national level. Another example is Mares’ (2000) work which argues for diversity across regions by analysing ‘strategic alliances’ in each region of France and Germany. However, her work focuses on the diversified policy making rather than implementation. In contrast, this research focuses on the implementation of welfare policy. It aims to provide evidence to reaffirm that diversity is a result of decentralisation towards welfare delivery.

Lastly, the diversity within the welfare state in this research is defined as the combination of uniformity and innovation. Unlike the existing literature, this research does not rush to conclude that a uniform pattern exists. Rather, it discusses the uniform pattern of SIBD first to illustrate an entire system as a substantial part of diversification (see Chapter 3). Then, along with some cases, the innovation is exemplified and compared with the uniform pattern to analyse the degree to which diversity exists (see Chapter 5).

### **2.1.3 Decentralisation**

Decentralisation is frequently left undefined, assigned many different meanings and varies across contexts and fields of research (Dubois & Fattore, 2009). Despite being ambiguous, decentralisation can be defined purposively. Broadly speaking, decentralisation is a dynamic process of authority transfer from national to sub-national organisations or agencies (Conyers, 1983) or a static situation in which authority is being transferred. However, being either dynamic or static, ‘it is generally more useful to consider “decentralisation” continuous than dichotomous (Treisman, 2002, p.3)’. Therefore, this research refers decentralisation as the transfer process. Concurrently, its focus is the static situation of decentralised authority and resource. Its intent is not to specify a centralised/decentralised dichotomy but, rather, to seek to find the degree of decentralisation.

There are two main categories of analysing decentralisation: political or fiscal. Analysing political decentralisation can be done in four aspects: devolution, delegation, deconcentration, and privatisation (Bremner, 2011). Recently, scholars go further to emphasize the impact of decentralisation as regional disparities (Rodríguez-Pose & Ezcurra, 2010), territorial differences (McEwen, 2005), or policy divergence (Greer, 2010). In short, they are interested in differentiation across territories. In fiscal decentralisation, scholars study efficiency, fiscal redistribution, and sometimes government spending initiative (see Ebel & Yilmaz, 2002; Oates, 1993). Accordingly, political and fiscal decentralisation is defined in this research as the decentralisation of authority and resources respectively.

To understand decentralisation, it is important to understand both the policy and the practice of decentralisation. Due to the enormity and complexity of the topic, scholars prefer to narrow down the scope of decentralisation study as much as possible. As Dubois and Fattore (2009) suggest, ‘[r]esearchers who do not explicitly look at each dimension or haphazardly aggregate dimensions will mismeasure the type and degree of decentralisation (p.706)’. Despite the breadth of the topic, this research takes a risk to investigate political and fiscal decentralisation both on paper (function, budget) and in practice (power, non-financial). As the research purpose is to understand decentralisation at the administrative level, power and non-financial decentralisation is necessarily investigated. Figure 2.1 illustrates how authority and resource decentralisation could be investigated and what the major sources of data are for each investigation of function/power (authority) and budget/non-financial resources (resources).

Figure 2.1 Evidence mapping of authority and resource decentralisation

		Data type	
		Tangible	Intangible
Analytical dimension	Resource	Budget (documents)*	Non-financial resources (observations, interviews)*
	Authority	Functions (documents)*	Power (interviews)*

\*(...) = major source of data

#### 2.1.4 Collaboration

Collaboration is concisely defined as ‘a purposive relationship designed to solve a problem by creating or discovering a solution within a given set of constraints (Agranoff & McGuire, 2003, p.4)’. Further, it is elaborated as a process in which involves ‘autonomous actors (Thomson & Perry, 2006)’, ‘interdependence (Gray, 1989)’, ‘creating (Gray, 1989; Thomson & Perry, 2006; McGuire, 2006)’ and ‘joint

decision-making (Gray, 1989; Thomson & Perry, 2006)'. Therefore, this research refers to collaboration as a process in which actors undertake joint decision-making whether to create, or not to create, interdependent activities under a set of constraints.

Understanding collaboration can be done in a linear dimension or a multi-dimension. Regarding linear dimension, Agranoff and McGuire (2003, p.69) explain collaboration in vertical – information seeking (IS), adjustment seeking (AS) – or horizontal – policymaking and strategy-making (PM), resource exchange (RE), project based (PB) – direction. In contrast, Thomson and Perry (2006) suggest that one could think of collaborative as an 'iterative and cyclical (p.22)' process and propose five dimensions of collaboration process (p.24) including: governing, administering, mutuality, norms, and organisational autonomy. Taking these into account, this research considers collaboration process in the latter perspective and examines the degree of collaboration by using Agranoff and McGuire's set of collaborative activities (IS, AS, PM, RE, PB; further discussed Chapter 6).

## **2.2 Literature review**

Four theoretical approaches are reviewed to construct theoretical guidelines for analyses and discussion in this dissertation. Firstly, this research selected a conventional approach to study social insurance administration in Thailand (Section 2.2.1). Then, a link between decentralisation and its impacts – responsiveness and initiative – is drawn to provide an analytical framework of decentralisation-diversity association (Section 2.2.2). Thirdly, this research constructs an analytical framework of collaboration based on Agranoff and McGuire's work (2003) (Section 2.2.3). Fourthly, two theories of IORs (relationship patterns, resource exchange) are reviewed to develop analytical framework for understanding relations between actors in SIBD. Additionally, Section 2.2.5 reviews Riggs' theories on prismatic society and bureaucratic polity. This helps to understand SIBD in Thailand and may expect to widen the knowledge of social insurance administration in developmental and transition contexts.

### **2.2.1 Social insurance**

To position this research in existing literature, it is found that social insurance is studied in at least three respects: policy analysis, economics, and administration. Firstly, policy analysts studying social insurance usually focus on institutional analysis such as: universalistic or targeting coverage (Reynaud, 2002; Van Ginneken, 2010); means-tested, contributory or citizenship entitlement (Soderberg & Alexanderson, 2005); or, the negotiation between policy actors (Kim, 2007). Secondly, economists also focus on institutional analysis of social insurance by, for example, discussing its efficiency or redistribution (Arachi & D'Antoni, 2004; Hindriks & De Donder, 2003). Lastly, in terms of administration, scholars either focus on the delivery of social insurance benefits (Bolderson et al, 1997) or briefly discuss its administration (Dixon, 1999; R. L. Walker, 2005). These literatures can also be categorised into two levels of analysis: institutional and administrative. A large number of them particularly those undertaken by policy analysts and economists are concentrated at the institutional level. However, only a limited number of studies discuss the administration of social insurance. This research, therefore, aims to expand the knowledge of the administration of social insurance and the delivery of social insurance benefits.

Moreover, social insurance has been studied either in general or in particular schemes. Until around 1990s, scholars were interested in social insurance as a general theme. These literatures discuss social insurance in general such as definition (Silburn, 1995), principle (see review in Feldstein, 2005), and institutional structure (Baldock, 1993; Korpi & Palme, 1998). Recently, however, studies related to social insurance has recently become more specific regarding its schemes i.e. unemployment, old-age, family, and health care. These literatures are indeed massive and varied. In short, while the studies of specific scheme are increasing; the studies of social insurance as a whole are declining. This actually might be a reflection of a practical world where some countries (e.g. UK, Germany) emphasise particular scheme for particular customers (customer-oriented scheme). However, there are still

some countries (e.g. Japan, Taiwan, Thailand) where all schemes are provided under the umbrella of social insurance (function-based provision).

Bearing in mind contextual differences across schemes, this research admittedly follows the conventional way of studying social insurance perceiving it as a single system comprised of all scheme. In other words, it aims to enhance the understanding of social insurance as a whole not a particular scheme. This may raise the question of the theoretical contribution of this research. However, again, while the existing literature mostly discusses social insurance at the institutional level (social insurance institution), this research particularly discusses it at the administrative level (social insurance administration). Specifically, it aims to provide evidence of how decentralisation affects an entire system of social insurance benefit delivery.

### **2.2.2 Decentralisation and its impacts**

The examination of decentralisation impact is complex and multidimensional as decentralisation ‘matters tremendously for the development of social policy, but in ways that are significantly mediated by other features of a particular political setting (Pierson, 1995, p.473)’. To measure decentralisation impact has never been an easy task (Dreher, 2006). As Smith (1985, p.85) suggests, ‘one obvious test of change in levels of decentralisation relates to the functions and powers of subordinate governments’ which may be measured by using data on spending and personnel. However, these indicators only exhibit changes at the policy level. They do not exhibit the impact of decentralisation at the implementation level. Therefore, this research includes responsiveness and initiative of each provincial actor into indicators of the decentralisation impact.

It is fair to draw a causal link between decentralisation and initiative or responsiveness. Based on early literature, responsiveness and policy innovation are believed to be impacts of decentralisation. In terms of responsiveness, it is suggested in Tibout’s work (1961 cited in Dreher, 2006, p.2) that decentralisation ‘improves respect for regional differences in preferences’. It enhances organisational autonomy and an organisation thus becomes more flexible in response to what is actually



needed for the local public (Rondinelli, 1983). This complies with the ‘notion of responsiveness’ which ‘requires policies to be flexible with respect to heterogeneous or time-varying community needs (Bardhan & Mookherjee, 2007, p.6)’. In terms of initiative, Shane (1992, p.29) suggests that initiative ‘requires decentralised authority because such a structure brings more information to the attention of the senior managers and gives employees greater incentive’. Similarly, innovation is created under flexible contexts and decentralised authority (Aghion & Tirole, 1997). Both encourage the organisation to develop and experiment their idea in response to local needs.

Whether responsiveness (Faguet, 2004; Rodríguez-Pose & Ezcurra, 2010) and policy innovation (Strumpf, 2002) is impacted by decentralisation have already been re-examined empirically. This research is therefore started based on such wisdom and attempts to expand the knowledge of association between decentralisation, responsiveness and innovation. It proposes a continuum of responsiveness by combining responsiveness and innovation altogether. Assuming that responsiveness is a result of decision-making based on local needs, innovation is a result of decision-making in combination of responsiveness and creativity. In other words, innovation is referred to as a more-advanced degree of responsiveness. Although both terms are often referred to as positive results of decentralisation (Aghion & Tirole, 1997; Bardhan & Mookherjee, 2007; Dreher, 2006; Hutchcroft, 2001; Smith, 1985), this research does not argue for, or prove, such positivity. Being aware that ‘benefits of decentralisation have been substantially overestimated (Dreher, 2006, p.2)’, both terms are taken into consideration as a result of decentralised decision-making without any judgment on, for example, decentralisation success or the actor’s good performance.

### *2.2.2.1 Responsiveness*

Responsiveness has been consistently studied in at least three fields including political science, business, and public administration. Studies in the first two fields are relatively more focused. While political scientists focus on responsiveness as agencies’ external control and political responsiveness; business scholars focus on

responsiveness to the market (Yang & Pandey, 2007, p.216). However, responsiveness remains an ambiguous and dynamic concept to public administration scholars (e.g. Saltzstein, 1992; Vigoda, 2002; Yang & Pandey, 2007). The most common concept of responsiveness is viewed as a result of interrelations between public service agencies, citizens, and policy pressures. For example, responsiveness is sometimes defined as ‘congruence between the goals the organisation or administrative system pursues and the goals desired by the people to whom the organisation is responsible and under whose authority it operates (Fried, 1976 cited in Yang & Pandey, 2007, p.217)’ or ‘willingness to strike some balance between professional standards and values and community priorities (Saltzstein, 1992)’.

Further, Yang and Pandey’s (2007) study suggests three external (public/media, clients, elected officials) and two internal (decentralisation, results-based management) factors as positive variables of responsiveness. Indeed, decentralisation and result-based management (RBM) are crucial to decision-making of an organisation. However, if both are designed by the central government and imposed on sub-national government organisations, it is dubious to consider them as internal factors since they are actually pressures from an external organisation. Therefore, this research considers decentralisation and RBM as external factors which may hinder/enhance the capacity of an organisation. It applies Saltzstein’s proposition (1992) on responsiveness. He suggests two factors of responsiveness – interest of the state and public wishes. More precisely, responsiveness is the SSRO’s attempt to balance local needs and political pressures. Local needs refer to necessity (observed by officials; related to official’s professional standard) or request (submitted by customers) of insured persons within the province. Political pressures are either from the national (e.g. the SSO, the central government) or the provincial (e.g. PAUs or the PSSS) levels.

Based on public administration literature, this research develops a framework to identify degree of responsiveness by putting the two factors on a continuum. (see Figure 2.3). On the left is an organisation’s responsiveness to political pressures from the national level, for example, the SSO’s policies. In the middle, it is responsiveness

to provincial actors e.g. governor or local government. Lastly, on the right, it is responsiveness to local service recipients e.g. insured persons in the province.

Figure 2.2 Degree of responsiveness

	<b>Political pressures</b>		<b>Public needs</b>	
<b>Less</b>	<b>Central policy</b> +	<b>Provincial policy</b> ++	<b>Local needs</b> +++	<b>More</b>
	<b>Routine</b>	<b>Responsive</b>	<b>Initiative</b>	

Indeed, the term ‘responsiveness’ reflects a government organisation’s attitude toward its citizens. Vigoda (2002) suggests five roles of citizens – subjects, voters, customers, partners, and owners – which on the other hand imply five roles of government organisations – rulers, trustees, managers, partners, subjects. Emphasising responsiveness, this research undeniably considers insured persons as customers and the SSROs as public managers. The view should have been shifted towards seeing citizens and government organisations as partners according to a trend in public administration studies (see Vigoda, 2002). However, the idea of citizens being partners in social insurance administration exists only in some developed welfare states e.g. Germany where the tri-partite system is established. That is not the case of Thailand. The aim of this research is to understand how the tripartite board concept works in developing countries where tripartite board is less influential and insured persons rarely collaborate with social insurance agency in policy-making. Therefore, this research applies the view of customer/manager interaction and bears in mind the possibility of partner/partner interaction.

#### **2.2.2.2 Initiative**

The question of whether decentralisation increases initiative has been of interest to scholars. While some argue that decentralisation induces initiatives (Aghion & Tirole, 1997); others contrarily find that centralisation is more suitable for initiation (V. A. Thompson, 1976). Acknowledging the latter set of literature, this research

follows the former considering decentralisation and initiatives as cause and effect. Also, as proposed in Figure 2.2, initiative is arguably an advanced level of being responsive. Therefore, initiative is referred to as the composition of responsiveness and innovation.

Innovation and initiative are overlapping concepts. Innovation is recognized as part of diversity and frequently used in many studies (Considine & Lewis, 2007; Damanpour, 1991; Osborne & Brown, 2005; Thompson, 1965; Walker, 2010). For example, Damanpour (1991, p.556) defines ‘organisational innovation’ as ‘device, system, policy, programme, process, product, or service that is new [underlined to emphasise the key term] to the adopting organisation’. Added to this, the term ‘initiatives’ used in this research connotes not only novelty but also proactivity. According to Birkinshaw (1997, p.210), ‘an initiative is viewed as a discrete, proactive undertaking that advances a new way for the corporation [organisation] to use or expand its resources’. Therefore, innovation and initiative are used interchangeably in this research. When initiative is used, the proactivity is meant to be emphasised.

### **2.2.3 Collaborative Public Management**

This research refers to collaborative public management as Agranoff and McGuire (2003) define it as ‘a concept that describes the process of facilitating and operating in multiorganisation arrangements to solve problems that cannot be solved, or solved easily, by single organisations (p.4)’. With its emphasis on public managers (Agranoff, 2006; McGuire, 2006; Thomson & Perry, 2006) and initiative (Agranoff & McGuire, 2003; Gray, 1989), this approach serves as an analytical framework of decision-making mechanisms within the SIBD process.

An interesting framework to understand diversification of SIBD (particularly in Chapter 5 and 7) is collaborative management approach proposed by Agranoff and McGuire (2003). Their purposes are to ‘(1) demonstrate the various ways in which multi-organisational, multi-actor collaboration is utilized as a public policymaking and management tool by cities, and (2) consider the under-recognized practical and

theoretical issues at the forefront of public management, and public management in practice (p.6)'. Their study argues that, while public management varies among cases depending on political-economic factors, the most influential factor is the role of a public manager whose collaborative activity is a result of a collaborative strategy. This approach thus partially becomes the platform of models of SIBD diversification (see Section 2.4). Moreover, they hypothesise that 'city-level "values" of collaborative management vary across cities and that explanations can be found for how it differs, why it differs, and what determines the differences (p. 6)'. Sharing the same interest and hypothesis, this research seeks evidence for social insurance administration whereby collaboration exists and varies across provinces (see Chapter 5).

Applying this approach, however, this research employs different research methods. Agranoff and McGuire rely mostly on a survey (237 cities) and supplemented it with in-depth interviews in six selected cities (see Agranoff & McGuire, 2003, p.9-10). This definitely provides extensive data to understand collaborative management. However, their respondents are only the city governments which appear to be their central unit of analysis. This research is designed to investigate not only the central unit's but also stakeholders' views on collaboration. Specifically, as well as the SSRO, a central unit of analysis, other actors in provincial SIBD are interviewed. This consequently embraces stakeholders' perspectives to expand the insight of how collaboration is formed and works. Further, this research aims to fulfil one of the weaknesses of Agranoff and McGuire's study, indicated by themselves, that their research 'do[es] not capture the level of power and influence that various players may possess (p.185)'.

#### **2.2.4 Inter-organisational relations**

The trend of inter-organisational relation studies has changed over time which makes the definition of inter-organisational relations (IORs) variable. Before 2000s, the literature on IOR was consistently reviewed by many scholars (Aldrich, 1971; Astley & Sachdeva, 1984; C. Oliver, 1990; Galaskiewicz, 1985; Hvinden, 1991; O'Toole, 1993). Most of them discussed three major aspects of IORs, as suggested by

Galaskiewicz (1985): resource dependence (J. D. Thompson, 1967), policy advocacy (Ellison, 1998), and organisational legitimation (see Galaskiewicz, 1985, p. 296). Later, after 2000s, IORs have been studied by scholars under different terms such as collaborative management (Agranoff & McGuire, 2003; Skelcher *et al*, 2005), multi-level governance (Peters & Pierre, 2001), or joined-up government (Perri 6, 2004). As Oliver and Ebers (1998, p.549) state, the study of IORs is in ‘a rather messy situation marked by a cacophony of heterogeneous concepts, theories, and research results’. Still, however the term is coined, its core remains under IORs (Cropper, 2008, p.5). In this research, IORs refers to interrelation between actors involving resource exchange, policy advocacy, and organisational legitimacy.

More specifically, acknowledging the trend, this research basically aims to examine IORs on the basis of resource dependency. This approach proposes that the scarcity of essential resources will force actors to establish relationships with others in order to obtain the needed resources (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). Also, as organisations must engage in exchange relations to obtain necessary resources through exchange linkages with other organisations, ‘it is fruitful to conceive of an inter-organisational field as a network of exchange relations among member units or organisations’ (Cook, 1977, p.68). Thus, it is necessary to understand relationship pattern on the basis of resource exchange. Applying this approach to the research provides an analytical framework for understanding IORs in Thailand’s SIBD.

#### *2.2.4.1 Relationship patterns*

To classify IORs, Hall et al (1977) suggest three patterns of relationships – mandated by law, based on formal agreement, or voluntary. However, the authors appear to distinguish the agreement-based pattern at the different stage of relationship evolution from the other two patterns. For instance, they suggest that voluntary and law-mandated relations are derived from different preconditions at the formation stage. In contrast, they refer to agreement-based relations as a pattern evolved from voluntary agreement (Hall et al, 1977, p.459-460). It is a pattern being standardized after the formation stage of a voluntary relationship. Thus, there are actually two patterns of relationship: mandated and voluntary. Moreover, C. Oliver (1990)

proposed six types of relations including: trade associations, voluntary agency federations, joint venture, joint programmes, corporate-financial interlocks, and agency-sponsor linkages. However, she emphasises that the first type is mandated and the rest are voluntary forms. Therefore, this research will analyse IORs in two patterns: obligatory (mandated) and voluntary. Nonetheless, this is not to say that a voluntary relationship is not designated by any rules or agreements. Vrooman (2009, p.73) suggests that ‘to a certain degree all interaction is influenced by rules, because language and implicit expectations play an important role in it’.

#### *2.2.4.2 Resource exchange*

Resource exchange among organisations has been investigated by many authors (see full review in (Lazega & Pattison, 1999)). Within the extensive body of IOR literature, scholars sometimes take it for granted that it is the public manager’s task to deal with resource exchange (Agranoff & McGuire, 2003; Hvinden, 1991; Weiss, 1987). In attempts to clarify resource exchanges in SIBD, this research discusses the gaps between mandated (what is designated in policy documents), expected (what is perceived as necessary by an actor) and actual (what is transferred in practice) resources within each dyadic relationship. Indeed, it is common that needs are not always met. It is interesting, however, to understand the extent to which the gaps exist and what their impacts are on service delivery.

Literature on this aspect is growing. It argues that, if expectations are met, inter-organisational trust (Gulati & Nickerson, 2008; Zaheer et al, 1998) or, contrarily, conflict (Alter, 1990; Kumar & Dissel, 1996) will emerge. Apparently, if two actors can fulfil each other’s expectation, the relation tends to grow. As Agranoff and McGuire (1998, p.7) indicate, ‘[T]he greater the interdependencies between actors, the greater the need for coordination and collaboration’. In contrast, if needs are not fulfilled, conflict or tension is likely to occur. Thus, this research argues that these gaps of resource exchange play a role in organisational interdependency. It is hypothesised that fulfilment of the expectations could strengthen the relations and, subsequently, lead to innovation which diversifies service delivery.

Developed from Hvinden's framework (1991, pp.251-252), resources of concern in this research are classified into six types: information, staff, service, expertise, authority, and material resources. Hvinden presents four types of task resources: information, staff's service and expertise, possibilities of making referrals, and material resources. Two major types of information are concerned: information about clients and their circumstances and other organisations' regulations and priorities. Although Hvinden combines staff, service, and expertise together, these three are actually different. Staffs are human resource (hardware); while service is their action in response to responsibilities and clients and expertise is their knowledge and wisdom in providing the service (software). Hvinden's term 'referrals' – one actor avoids being blamed by referring to other organisations – is somewhat ambiguous, since this could be relation rather than resource. Instead, referral can be considered as 'authority' being used where the first party suggests other organisations to take part in the second party's operation. Lastly, material resources simply mean either financial resources or office products. Sometimes financial resource will be specifically identified if available.

### **2.2.5 Prismatic society and bureaucratic polity**

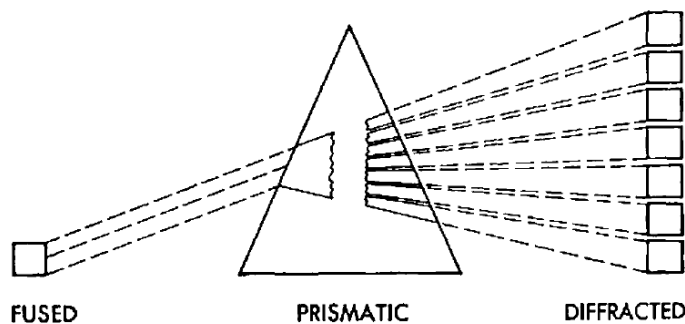
Selecting Thailand as a case of study, an approach to explain social insurance in local contexts is necessary. This research requires an additional concept to supplement European-based literature and Riggs's concept seems to fit the purpose. In attempt to understand public administration in developing countries, Riggs (1961) introduced prismatic model which basically suggests researchers take into account the ecology of administration. This model provides an analytical framework of administration and its society in five aspects: economic, social, symbolic, communicative and political (see Riggs, 1964). Drawing upon a linear perspective (see Riggs, 1963), three types of society – fused, prismatic, and diffracted – are suggested. In brief, he analyses how developing countries, sometimes referred as transitional societies, are changed through modernization putting traditional and modern society at two ends of a continuum. On one end, fused society – sometimes referred as traditional society – is a society in which particular structure fulfils several functions. On the other end,



diffracted society bears characteristics of modern, or Western, society where its structure is highly organized with specific function of each organization in the society. Riggs (1961) illustrates hypothetical fused society in which a single structure performs all necessary functions and diffracted (refracted) society in which a single structure performs particular function (see Figure 2.3) as below:

‘Let us call it a “fused model”, just as we call white light fused. In extreme contrast, let us imagine a situation in which every function has a corresponding structure that is specialized for its performance. We call this situation a “refracted model”, just as we say that light is refracted into all the separate colours of a rainbow or spectrum (p.92).’

Figure 2.3 Prismatic model



Source: Riggs (2006, p. 38)

In his empirical studies (Riggs, 1958, 1959, 1966), however, Riggs found that these two types of society cannot explain administrative system and social structure in developing countries. He thus proposed a ‘prismatic model’ to explain how formal structure imported from the Western countries was implemented under the traditional culture of developing countries. Like the moment when fused light being refracted in a prism, prismatic society reflects a society in which formally differentiated structures (diffracted) traditionally perform their roles regarding its cultures and values (fused). Formalism is one of key characteristics which one would find in prismatic society as Riggs (1963, p. 154) stresses such questions as ‘what is prescribed ideally and what actually happen’ in order to understand transitional

societies. Besides, Riggs discusses bureaucratic power in transitional societies – how bureaucracy dominates not only administration but also politics in developing countries (Riggs, 1964, 2006). This type of state is termed as a ‘bureaucratic polity’ discussed with evidence particularly from his empirical study in Thailand (Riggs, 1966). Briefly, reflecting Riggs’ concepts, Rock (2000, p. 184) concludes that bureaucratic polity is ‘a political system where power and prestige were located within the bureaucracy, rather than in extra-bureaucratic forces or political parties under parliamentary rule.’

The prismatic model has become widely accepted and applied particularly in studies in comparative and development administration. As Peng (2008, p. 528) indicates, ‘those who study comparative public administration will inevitably find reason to critique Fred W. Riggs’ “fused-prismatic-diffracted model”, but in conducting research, no one is free of Riggs’ influence.’ Not only appreciations but also criticisms arise from Riggs’ proposition of the prismatic model. For example, Riggs’ analysis is often questioned if it emphasizes too much on the Western, or American, concept of social structure and public administration as a destination of change for developing countries (Chapman, 1966; Kasfir, 1969; Peng, 2008; Subramaniam, 2000). His illustration of the prismatic model is criticized as too plain (Subramaniam, 2000). New vocabularies – e.g. bazaar-canteen, clects, sala – he introduced with his own definition are noted as sometimes confusing and the reader might find difficult to follow (Chapman, 1966; Peng, 2008; Subramaniam, 2000).

Despite such critiques, Riggs further developed the prismatic model emphasizing the aim to provide a model for understanding transitional societies (see especially Riggs, 2006). He emphasizes that ‘the “prismatic model” is not merely another euphemism chosen to avoid invidious comparisons. Rather, it is used in an effort to identify and analyze a particular kind of social order of wide prevalence and importance (p.44).’ Also, in his bi-linear version of the prismatic model, he suggests that characteristics of fused, prismatic, or diffracted societies may coexist in one society – either Western or non-Western (see especially Riggs, 2006, pp. 37-40). In other words, it cannot be simply said that one society is more or less fused, prismatic, or diffracted.

Each society rather configures several characteristics. This research agrees with his later view and thus applies it to the case of Thailand.

To a certain extent, Thailand is of course one of developing countries in transition which can be explained by prismatic model. It is a society in which formalism prominently appears. Also, its system was labelled as a 'bureaucratic polity' when bureaucrats were the most powerful actors in politics (Riggs, 1966). An interesting question, however, is to what extent such model and concept remain applicable to the Thai case. This question could be considered in terms of societal and political development. Firstly, Thai contemporary society cannot simply be explained by the original yet over-simplified prismatic model (see Riggs, 1964). Rather, with large urban-rural gaps, it is more suitable to apply the revised prismatic model (see Riggs, 2006) to understand the extent to which Thai society comprises fused, prismatic, or diffracted features of traditional, transitional, or modern societies respectively.

Secondly, as democratization is in progress, the concept of bureaucratic polity is declared to be dead in Thailand by many scholars (see the full list in Ockey, 2004, p.143; further discussed in Chapter 3). Particularly, in 1997, the new Constitution was legislated with hope to provide 'a new set of institutions to police politicians and bureaucrats (Unger, 2003, p. 190)' and diffuse the power of bureaucratic elites. However, Ockey (2004) convincingly argues that the concept of bureaucratic polity 'continues to haunt scholars of Thai studies (p.143)'. One of his points is that bureaucratic power strongly remains as part of Thai contemporary politics. Otherwise, as he questions (p.143), 'why does the Thaksin government [2001-2006] conceive of the bureaucracy as such a barrier to democracy? To discuss these two sets of questions further, evidence from four selected provinces in Thailand will be provided in later chapters.

## **2.3 Conceptual framework**

It is originally hypothesised that diversity within the welfare state is a result of decentralisation. This research starts with the assumption that decentralisation changes inter-organisational relations, simultaneously induces public responsiveness;

and, subsequently, increases diversity of public service delivery. Later on, collaboration is taken into account as a potential factor to the diversification since it involves creating, interdependence and joint decision-making (see Section 2.1.4). Thus, this research examines the association between three variables: decentralisation, collaboration and the diversity of SIBD. It applies actor-centred institutionalism as an analytical framework to understand actors, relations and the diversity (see Section 2.2.1). It then applies four theoretical approaches – social insurance, decentralisation, CPM, IORs – to explain how the diversity happens and the extent to which decentralisation and collaboration diversify SIBD (see Section 2.2.2). It is also necessary to understand local contexts of Thailand and the prismatic model is thus selected to explain these contexts (see Section 2.2.3).

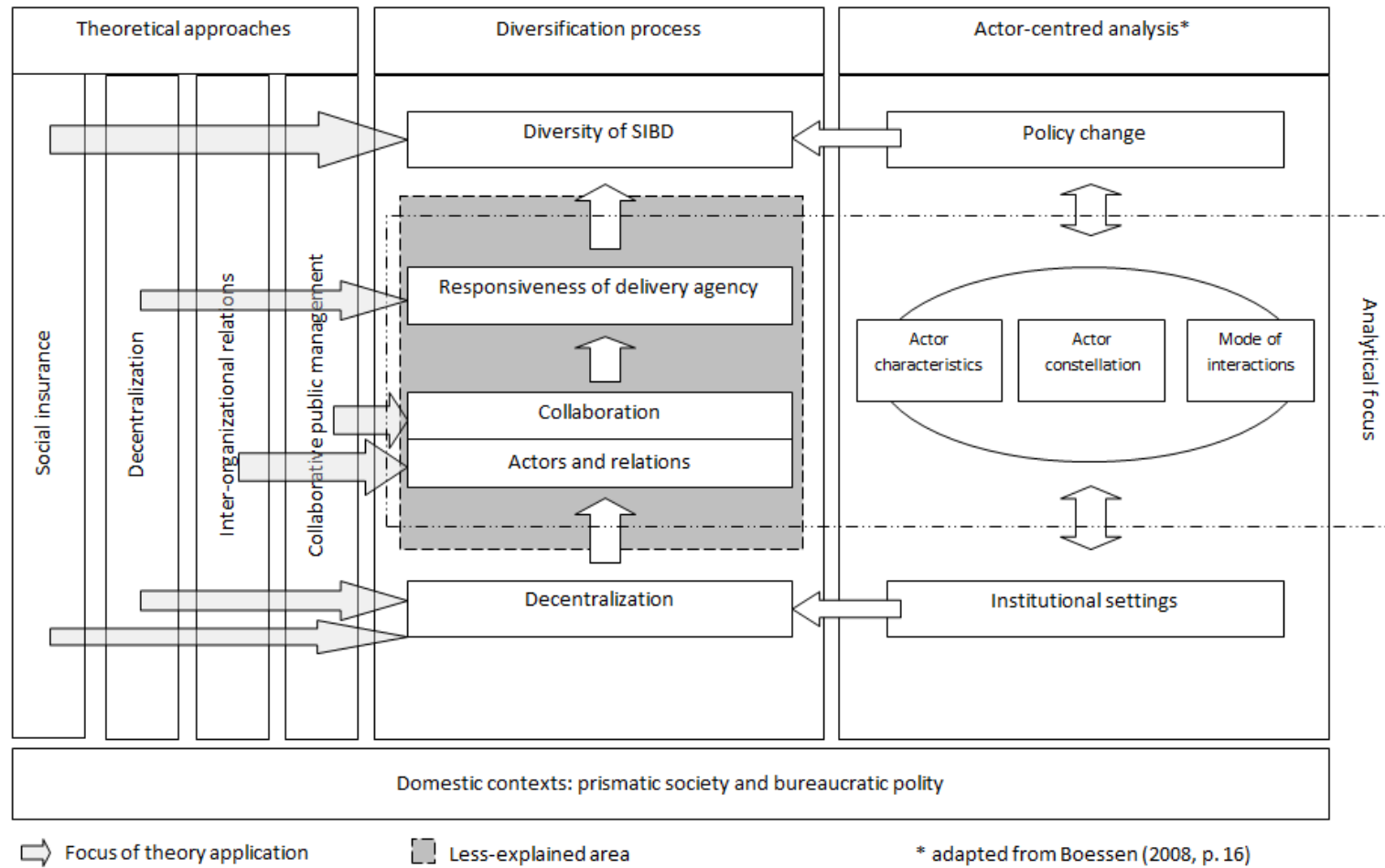
### **2.3.1 Actor-centred analysis**

Employing actor-centred analysis, this research aims to clarify social insurance institution, its institutional settings and policy changes. Three components of an institution are of concern: actor characteristics, actor constellation, and mode of interaction. Following definitions suggested by Boessen (2008), actor characteristics depend on their ‘capabilities, orientations, and concept of rationally bounded actor (p.16)’; ‘actor constellation represents a static picture of actors’ relations (p.19)’; and, mode of interaction ‘concerns the dynamics of actor interaction (p.19)’. Only two concepts – actor characteristic, actor constellation – are applied to the analysis in this research to draw a static composition of an institution.

### **2.3.2 Theoretical approaches**

Four theoretical approaches – social insurance, decentralisation, CPM, IORs – are employed with particular focus of theory application to examine the diversification process (see Figure 2.4). Also, each approach has its own function in the conceptual framework as elaborated below.

Figure 2.4 Conceptual framework



### *2.3.2.1 Social insurance: identifying theoretical gaps*

A major contribution of this research is to fulfil the explanatory gaps between diversity within the welfare state and decentralisation. As discussed earlier, the diversity is explained as a result of decentralisation. However, such explanation briefly clarifies the situation between diversity and decentralisation. Therefore, this research would argue that diversity is not only a result of decentralisation at the institutional level but also collaboration at the implementation level. It aims to elaborate what goes on inside the less-explained area and how such area is interrelated to decentralisation and diversity.

### *2.3.2.2 Decentralisation: explaining change of institutional settings*

Decentralisation has been a hot topic for several decades. On the one hand, decentralisation is perceived as an ideal instrument of empowering citizens (Tibout, 1956). It conveys positive results such as responsiveness (Bardhan & Mookherjee, 2007) and initiative (Strumpf, 2002). On the other hand, an increasing number of scholars argue that these benefits have been overestimated (see Dreher, 2006). Drawing upon this debate, this research builds up its argument on the assumption that decentralisation makes changes to institutional settings of SIBD diversification process resulting in responsiveness (see Faguet, 2004; Rodríguez-Pose & Ezcurra, 2010) and collaboration in SIBD (see Section 2.3).

### *2.3.2.3 Collaborative public management (CPM): understanding decision-making mechanism*

In response to institutional change (decentralisation), an actor needs to readjust its activities. This research employs a Collaborative Public Management (CPM) approach to analyse the decision-making mechanism of the readjustment. As Thomson and Perry (2006, p. 20) suggest, '[d]evolution, rapid technological change, scarce resources, and rising organisational interdependencies are driving increasing levels of collaboration'. Therefore, it is apparent that decentralisation increases levels of collaboration and simultaneously an actor's responsiveness. Also, CPM

emphasises variation of public service delivery at the sub-national level (Agranoff & McGuire, 2003). It provides a framework to analysing the variation which is a result of collaborative activity and strategy (see Section 2.4).

#### *2.3.2.4 Inter-organisational relations (IORs): investigating patterns and interdependence*

This approach is applied to investigate relationship patterns and resource interdependence of actors in SIBD (see Section 2.5). As a firm ground to understanding collaboration, roles and relations of actors need to be clarified. As Pierson (1995, p.463) suggests, ‘while the rules of the game are of tremendous significance, so are the identities, interests, and resources of the players. Policy outcomes depend on the interplay of these factors, rather than being dictated by institutions alone.’ The purpose of this theory application is therefore both analytical and descriptive in order to understand such factors and provide a platform for further discussion.

### **2.3.3 Domestic contexts: prismatic society and bureaucratic polity**

To supplement European-based literature, this research applies Riggs’ prismatic model (1966) which provides an extensive, although obsolete, explanation of public administration in developing countries (discussed earlier in Section 2.2.5). His work provides a framework to further understand SIBD in such developing contexts as Thailand. Also, it is noted whether bureaucratic polity is dead considering Thai contemporary politics (see Section 2.2.5). Some argue that the concept cannot be applied to Thai case any longer. Others argue that it remains applicable. Specifically, looking at Thaksinization period, Thaksin’s attempts to diffuse bureaucratic power reinforce immortality of bureaucratic polity in Thailand. This research will discuss evidence from the field regarding this debate too.

Before proceeding, it should be noted that this research could fall in between organisation theory and institutionalism. While the former is a somewhat developed concept and getting less attention, the latter has become increasingly famous in the social science (Hall & Taylor, 1996; Kraatz & Zajac, 1996; Palmer, Biggart, & Dick, 2008;

Peters, 2005). However, the institutionalism concept is still dynamic, ambiguous and sometimes repetitive of the classic organisation theory. For example, Haveman and David (cited in Greenwood, 2008, p.5) challenge institutionalists ‘to reach agreement on the meaning of central constructs and wean themselves from using the vapid term institution, which means everything and therefore nothing’. Also, there are several attempts to combine the two concepts into ‘organisational institutionalism’ (Greenwood, 2008; Powell & DiMaggio, 1991). However, this novel concept is even more complex and ambiguous. Acknowledging these ambiguities and overlaps between the three concepts, this research rather employs the first two concepts to clarify the interrelation and distinction between organisation and institution and puts the third concept aside.

## 2.4 Proposition on models of SIBD diversification

This research proposes three models of SIBD diversification configuring three aspects: diversity, collaboration and decentralisation (see Table 2.1). Firstly, collaboration will be examined by investigating inter-organisational relations and resource dependence and the degree of diversification is determined by the differentiation of SIBD from a uniform pattern (see Chapter 5). Secondly, the decentralisation degree will be examined in two regards: decentralised activities and contexts of the SSRO (see Chapter 6).

Table 2.1 Models of SIBD diversification

Diversification pattern	Collaboration degree	Decentralisation Degree	Diversification degree
Weberian	Low	Low	Low
Customer-oriented	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Strategic	High	High	High

Three patterns of diversification – Weberian, customer-oriented, strategic – are particularly developed from Agranoff and McGuire’s (2003) six models of



collaborative management (see Table 2.1). They suggest a model of collaborative management as ‘the intersection of two variables or dimensions: (1) a city's collaborative activity level [collaborative activity] and (2) the extent to which such activity is strategic [collaborative strategy] (p. 43)’. Apparently, the diversification model is constructed upon the collaborative strategy dimension rather than the activity dimension. Within a single model, the degree of collaboration is left to be varied. This is because this research considers strategic decisions as a result of decentralisation which diversifies SIBD and attempts to clarify variation of collaborations or collaborative activity in Agranoff and McGuire’s term.

Table 2.2 Development of diversification models\*

Agranoff & McGuire’s models	Collaborative activity	Collaborative strategy	Models of diversification
Top-down (TD)	Moderate	Low	Weberian
Abstinence (Ab)	Low	Low	
Donor-recipient (DR)	High	Moderate	Customer-oriented
Reactive (Re)	Low	Moderate	
Jurisdiction-based (JB)	High	High	Strategic
Contented (Co)	Low	High	

\*Author’s construct based on Agranoff and McGuire (2003)

The first pattern, Weberian, is simply based on a traditional bureaucratic pattern with three major characteristics: hierarchy, specialization, standardization (Aucoin, 1997, p.290). The Weberian, or ideal-type, bureaucracy is a distinct organisational setting which is ‘formalized, hierarchical, specialized with a clear functional division of labor and demarcation of jurisdiction, standardized, rule based, and impersonal (Olsen, 2006, p. 2)’. Despite being critiqued of, for example, its trained incapacity (Merton, 1940), goal displacement (Etzioni, 1964), and obsolescence (see Olsen, 2006), this pattern of bureaucratic system survives through paradigm shifts in public administration (see for example Peters & Pierre, 2003). Thus, it would be unsurprising to find that the Weberian pattern exist in SIBD.

In this research, the Weberian model of SIBD diversification encompasses four features: routine responsiveness, low-level collaboration, low-level decentralisation

and low-level diversification. Under this pattern of delivery, the SSRO's type of responsiveness is routine. This means that the SSRO, a delivery agency in the province, rigidly follows the SSO's central policies. They usually implement routine projects only. They prefer a single standard and prioritise the central office's policy. Concurrently, their degree of collaboration is low as collaboration is not their predominant strategy. Their degree of decentralisation is also low as they tend not to implement devolved authorities and resources. Their delivery pattern is not, or is at best only slightly, diversified from the uniform pattern resulting in the low level of diversification. Thus, the SSRO which entails these four features will be classified into the Weberian pattern.

Secondly, the customer-oriented pattern is based on the concept that customer-oriented services involve attentiveness on at least three issues: social diversity, service delivery and the interaction with users, and users as active participant in needs-defining process (J. Clarke & Newman, 1997, p.111). In this research, 'customer-oriented' entails four features: being responsive, a moderate degree of collaboration, a moderate degree of decentralisation and a moderate degree of diversification. Under this pattern, the SSRO's responsiveness is labelled as 'responsive'. This occurs when the agency respond to customer's needs concerning service provision or benefit delivery (Brooks & Manza, 2006; Fossett & Thompson, 2006; Saltzstein, 1992; West, 1984).

Notably, the distinction between routine and responsive activities should be clarified. It should be clear that a responsive project could possibly be imported from other SSRO's initiatives without adaptation. For example, if the SSRO's project in one province is a lesson learned from the SSRO in the other province, it will be considered as a responsive project and the case will be indicated at the moderate level. However, if such project is following orders from or regulations of other organisations – e.g. Public Administrative Units (PAUs), departments, ministries, the project will be considered as routine intergovernmental cooperation instead. In other words, if the SSRO needs to cooperate with other governmental organisations under orders or regulations, such activity is routine rather than responsive.

Thirdly, in the strategic pattern, the agency tends to have ‘decision patterns evolving over time as relatively autonomous managers within the organisation engage in resource committing activities ... and take actions in response to changing market conditions (Juul, 2004, p.263)’. This pattern encompasses four features: initiative, a high level of collaboration, a high level of decentralisation, and a high level of diversification. The responsiveness of the SSRO falling into this strategic pattern is not only responding to customer’s needs but also taking initiative. Taking initiative is defined as the ability to operate a new-and-proactive project (Birkinshaw, 1997; Considine & Lewis, 2007; Damanpour, 1991; Goes & Park, 1997; R. Walker, 2010). More precisely, being classified into this pattern, the SSRO operates an initiative project which is highly diversified from the uniform pattern.

## **Conclusion**

This research originally aims to clarify the association between diversification of SIBD and decentralisation. The basic assumption is that social insurance administration tends to be centralised and standardised, which results in uniformity of SIBD. However, it is likely to be diversified once decentralisation has been implemented. The more SIBD is decentralised, the more diversified it becomes. Drawing from existing literature, however, it questions whether the impact of decentralisation is overestimated and collaboration is actually major part of diversification (see Section 2.2). This research thus aims to deepen understanding of the extent to which decentralisation has impacts on SIBD. It is expected that this research could provide further discussion on how decentralisation changes the delivery pattern at the provincial level. It examines whether decentralisation is the only factor of the diversity or whether collaboration has its own part to play in the diversity. It could be expected to fill a theoretical gap, the less-developed explanation of the association between diversity, decentralisation and collaboration in welfare state (see Figure 2.1).

Therefore, this research provides an extensive investigation on the SIBD diversification process and proposes three models of diversification. These three models – Weberian, customer-oriented, strategic – are characterised with three

features: diversity degree, decentralisation degree, and collaboration degree (see Section 2.4). While collaborative management is employed as a major approach to analyse collaboration; the other three approaches – social insurance, decentralisation, IORs – are essential to understand SIBD diversification process and its institutional settings (see Section 2.3.2). Also, with Thailand as a case of study, prismatic model is expectedly taken into consideration to widen, or deepen, the understanding of SIBD in developing countries (see Section 2.3.5). Particularly, it discusses SIBD diversification under political instabilities and the influence of major political figures like Thaksin Shinawatra.

The next chapter justifies the country selection and discusses policy developments and the research background.



## **Chapter 3 : The Case of Thailand**

To provide a brief picture of Thailand, this chapter has four sections. Section 3.1 discusses the justification of Thailand as a case study. Section 3.2 illustrates Thailand's politico-administrative structure and discusses the late 1990s decentralisation in Thailand. Section 3.3 explains the background and system of Thailand's social insurance. Section 3.4 discusses the impacts of decentralisation on Thailand's SIA.

### **3.1 Why Thailand?**

Thailand is selected as an interesting case for the examination of SIBD diversity for four reasons. Firstly, Thai SIA is a highly-centralised system with diversity of benefit delivery. At the national level, with seven types of benefit, the SSO is a single administrative body. This is different from at least six countries including Germany, France, UK, Sweden, and Taiwan (see Appendix 1). At the sub-national level, the SSRO is also interestingly a delivery agency for all social insurance benefits (SIBs). In the UK, for example, particular agencies are responsible for delivering a particular social insurance benefit e.g. JobCentre Plus for unemployment benefit delivery. Differently, Thailand's SSRO delivers and administers all types of SIBs including: sickness and injury, unemployment, elderly, disabled, child allowance, maternity, and death. Therefore, studying Thailand's SIBD could be an interesting case to examine the impact of decentralisation on an entire system of SIBD.

Secondly, Thailand's SIA has a dual characteristic of a social insurance administration. It is both a developed and a non-developed system. According to Walker's criteria (2005, p. 95), two criteria - funding and programme design – could be employed to differentiate non-developed from developed benefit administrations. Non-developed provision occurs where programme design and funding are a national responsibility (centralised); whereas in a fully developed provision both are operated locally (decentralised). Despite being centralised and likely to be non-developed, it could also be considered as a developed system. Although the Social Security Fund

in Thailand is administered by the SSO at national level, programme design could be modified by the SSRO at provincial level as a result of the late 1990s decentralisation. Therefore, as the delivery agency (the SSRO) can design its initiative projects, the Thai case contains both developed and non-developed characteristics of SIA.

Thirdly, in spite of its distinctive pattern of development, Thailand shares sufficient background with international models to make it a useful case study of social insurance policy implementation. Siffin (1982, p.3) admits that the Thai case is unique and may prove nothing for wider academic knowledge. However, he argues that it is still worth studying because the Thai case can test and perhaps demonstrate the utility of concepts flourishing in the study of modern and modernising government and politics. From the political economists' perspective, Thailand's capitalist transition has not matched the history of Anglo-American development; rather, it has been rapid and has deeply transformed society which has much that is recognisable in other transition experiences (Pasuk & Baker, 1998; Rodan, Hewison, & Robison, 2006, p.75). Similarly, Thailand is perceived as 'a fascinating kaleidoscope of the modern and traditional, the rural and the urban, and the affluent and the impoverished (McGregor et al, 2007, p.2)'. Moreover, Midgley (1984, p.105) emphasises that, although the colonial influence is significant to social security in developing countries, Thailand is an exceptional case which has never been colonised but is also influenced by the developed countries.

Fourthly, studying Thailand's SIA at the provincial level could exemplify the compromise between two policy actors (the SSRO and provincial governor). Thailand's politico-administrative system in combination with its historical context results in the distinctive characteristic of Thai SIA at the provincial-level. Historically, the governor was traditionally considered as a nobleman who was the representative of the King in each administrative area. However, in the reign of Chulalongkorn (Rama V, 1868-1910), principalities were transformed into regional

governments and as such lords changed their status, or title, to become a governor<sup>5</sup>. The provincial governor is thus possibly influential to SIBD due to this traditional superiority. Also, more recently, the provincial governor is appointed by the Ministry of Interior; is authorised to make overall decisions; and could relocate bureaucrats in particular positions of every regional office in the province. Formally, he is rarely involved in the SSRO's decision; whilst, informally and generally, if he requests the SSRO officials to do something, they tend to accept the request.

### 3.2 Political and Administrative Background

Historically, until the early period of Chakri Dynasty (1812-present), Thailand was governed by the King under a monarchy system. Enforced by the law, the position of the King is an object of extreme respect. This has led to a deferential tradition in Thai public life that also affects political and bureaucratic patterns. The greatest structural change of civil service emerged in the reign of Chulalongkorn (Rama V, 1868-1910) as a result of interactions with European expansionism. In order to negotiate with the European powers and preserve its own sovereignty, Thailand granted a few parts in the Northern and the Northeastern of the country to Britain and France and modernized its administrative system. Changing from feudalism to Western bureaucracy, Chulalongkorn decided to divide the old structure consisting of four ministries: *Wieng* (Ministry of Interior), *Wang* (Royal Embassy), *Klung* (Ministry of Finance), and *Na* (Ministry of Agriculture), into twelve ministries according to the Western structure, for example, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Development, Ministry of Economic, etc. However, although nobilities have been transformed to civil servants, their attitudes were the same, perceiving their social status as superior to their service recipients (Bowornwathana, 1983; (Morell & Samudavanija, 1981).

Later on, in the early decades of the twentieth century, many Thais studied overseas, and a small group of Western-educated elite with less traditional ideas emerged. In 1932 a bloodless coup d'etat by military officers and civil servants ended the absolute monarchy and inaugurated Thailand's constitutional era. Their professed goal was the

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<sup>5</sup> Occasionally, a governor is called *Pau Muang* (the father of the city) reflecting the strong perception of Thais towards the governor in a superior position.



introduction of parliamentary democracy, and they set up a National Assembly of appointed and elected members. However, Thailand's transformation towards a democratic political system has been inconsistent. Politics has been dominated by rival military-bureaucratic cliques headed by powerful generals (Therawekin, 1990). These cliques have initiated repeated coups d'etat and have imposed prolonged periods of martial law. For 60 years after 1932, the military dominated Thai government (Bunbongkarn, 2004) and it retains an important role in Thai politics. Also, businessmen have become emerging elites in either national or provincial politics (Laothamatas, 1988; McVey, 2000; Phongpaichit & Baker, 2004). The case of Thaksin is a prominent example of how they became influential figures in Thai contemporary politics (see McCargo & Ukrist, 2005). This section thus clarifies two major issues related to the research topic. One is politico-administrative structure and contemporary issues in Thai politics (see Section 3.2.1). Another is Thailand's administrative reform including its international contexts, history and the highlighted timeframe (see Section 3.2.2).

### **3.2.1 Thai politics and administration: structure and contemporary issues**

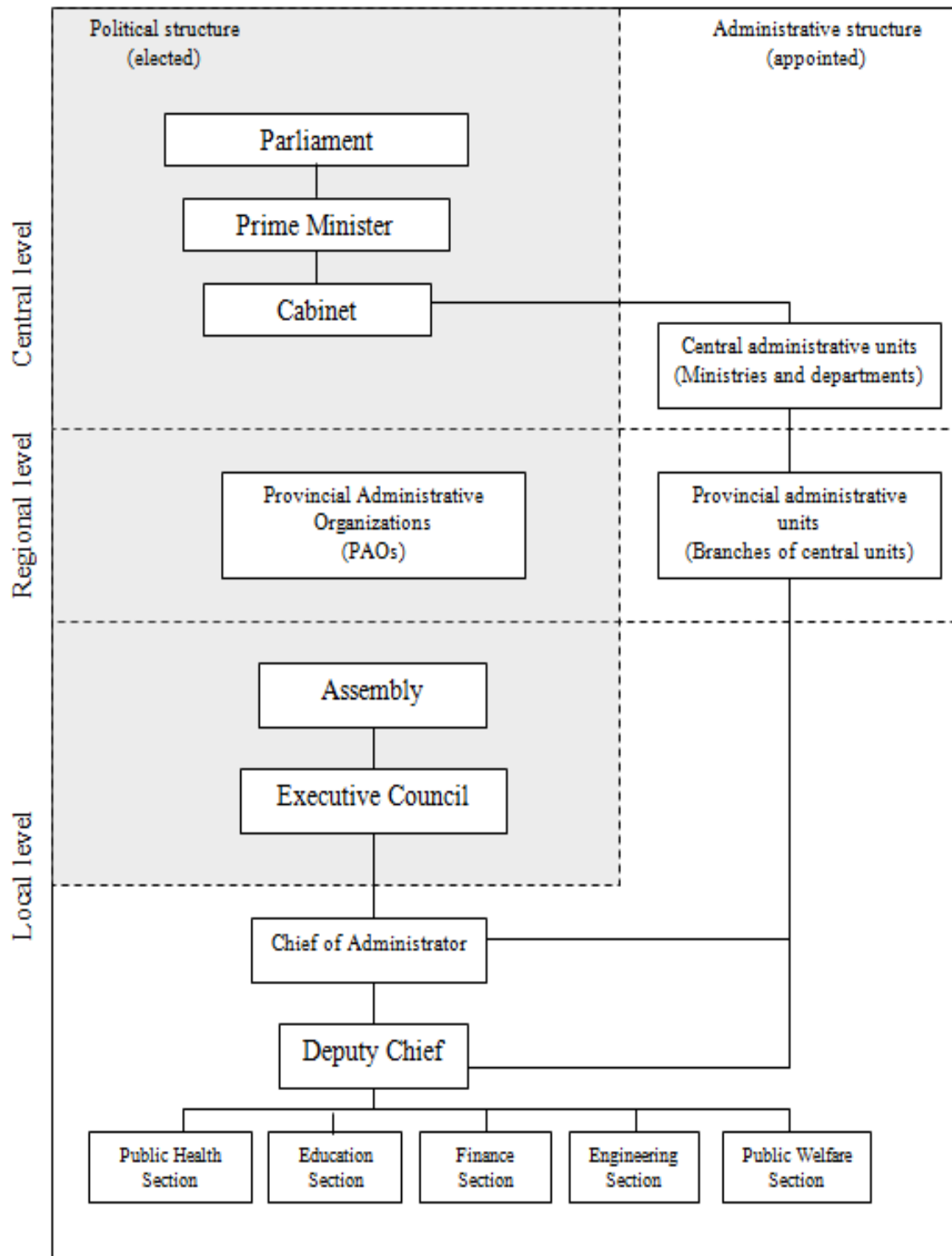
Having been a unitary administrative system since the promulgation of constitutional monarchy in 1932, Thailand's structure of the government is highly centralised with a single hierarchy (Bowornwathana, 2006, p.28). The politics of Thailand are currently conducted within the framework of a constitutional monarchy, whereby the Prime Minister (PM) is the head of Government and the King is the head of State. The judiciary is independent of the executive and the legislative branches. The National Assembly of Thailand (NAT) as the legislative branch consists of two chambers: the upper house (the Senate of Thailand) and the lower house (the House of Representatives of Thailand). The establishment of a cabinet, as an executive branch, is authorised to the PM and a number of positions as ministers, the minister of each ministry, vary depending on his discretion. The election system in Thailand includes three levels: national level (MPs, Senators), provincial level (Public Administrative Organisations: PAOs), and city (municipalities, special administrative

area) or sub-district (Subdistrict Administrative Organisations: SAOs) level. Accordingly, Thai political system is structured in three levels: central or national-level government; provincial governments; and local governments constituted.

In relation to the political system, Thailand's administrative system is also divided into three levels: central administration, provincial administration, and local administration (see State Administration Act 1991). The central administration consists of ministries and departments. Provincial administration comprises branches of the central government (Provincial Administrative Units: PAUs). Some departments might have a branch in every province; some might have a branch covering several provinces. Local administration includes: PAOs, municipalities, SAOs, and special administrative area (e.g. Bangkok, Pattaya). Considering three systems (electoral, political, and administrative systems) together, sometimes the boundary of provincial administration is confusing. Thus, it should be noted that 'provincial administration' in this research refers to the administration in, geographically speaking, a province.

Further, although Krannich's diagram (1979, p.514) depicting the politico-administrative structure is somewhat obsolete, it adequately portrays the system. Figure 3.1 is amended from his work, showing the recent (around 1990s-2000s) politico-administrative structure in Thailand. The three following subsections elaborate Thailand's politico-administrative contexts in three levels – national, provincial, local – based on Krannich's framework.

Figure 3.1 Thailand's politico-administrative structure



Source: adapted from Krannich (1979, p.514)

### 3.2.1.1 *National level*

In principle, the relationship between the political structure (parliament and cabinet) and the administrative structure (central administrative units) is through the interaction of policy makers and policy implementers respectively (see Figure 3.1). Regardless of this tidy modern structure, however, Riggs (1966) points out that Thailand is a bureaucratic polity in which politics and administration are intertwined as he suggests (p.242):

‘the great majority of those who reach the political pinnacle of cabinet rank emerge from careers within the bureaucracy, military and civil.’

From 1932 to 1970s, bureaucratic elites had dominated the government. Elections were at many times a process to legitimize those in power while many voters in provinces knew very little about election system (De Young, 1955). Instead of responding to their constituents, Riggs (1966, p.243) observes that ‘the Thai politician [whose career mostly starts in bureaucracy] is carried forward primarily by the dynamism of his personal quest for power’.

This theory remained applicable to the case of Thailand until recently. By the 1980s, ‘Thailand had transformed itself into the paladin of Southeast Asia’s capitalist take-off’ (McVey, 2000, p.3). Hewison (1997, p.3) indicates that Riggs’s theory of bureaucratic polity had previously been a significant consensus in the study of Thai political system. However, he notices that this modernization approach has been challenged since the early 1980s drawing on two approaches: political economy approach and neo-pluralist and institutionalist approach. While the former emphasises on societal or class influences on the state; the latter focuses on the identification of various interest groups e.g. business, bankers, provincial elites (Hewison, 1997, pp.6-10). These two approaches however discuss one thing in common: the emergence of business in Thai political arena. For example, Laothamatas (Laothamatas, 1988, p. 452) interestingly draws a conclusion that ‘two new forms of political influence by business have increased remarkably: (1) direct participation in Parliament and the cabinet, both through elections and the support of

the parties, and (2) group-based lobbying or membership in the Joint Public- Private Consultative Committees (JPPCCs)’.

Recent interventions of business into politics have indeed dramatically changed Thailand's political landscape. A prominent example of these interventions is the Thaksinization period in which Thaksin Shinawatra, a business-become-politician tycoon, dominates politics, bureaucracy, and business (see McCargo & Pathmanand, 2005; Phongpaichit & Baker, 2004). Being one of the most popular prime ministers in Thai political history (see McCargo & Pathmanand, 2005; Pathmanand, 1998; Phongpaichit & Baker, 2008), he has personal relations with a number of senior bureaucrats and politicians through his telecommunication business network (Shin Corporations) and old-school ties (Armed Forces Academies Preparatory School). This partially enabled him to also be one of the most powerful prime ministers who undeniably brought on dramatic changes to Thai politics at all levels. He is perceived as not only ‘a new phenomenon in Thai politics (Phongpaichit and Baker, 2004, 2008)’ and who is ‘going beyond the Thai state (Glassman (2004))’ but also ‘an opportunistic politician, for whom ideas are simply a means to an end (McCargo and Pathmanand, 2005)’. In any case, provincial and local politics has consequently become more connected to national politics than the past. At the national level, power between political elites has been restructured.

Despite such arguments that the Thai bureaucratic polity has been changed (Hewison, 1997; McVey, 2000; Rock, 2000; Unger, 1998), some argue that it still exists in Thailand (Arghiros, 2001; Haque, 2010; Ockey, 2004). As mentioned earlier, Ockey (2004) insists that the bureaucratic polity still haunts Thai politics as the bureaucracy is still of Thaksin’s major concern. Haque (2010) emphasises that either civil or military bureaucrats still play substantial roles in Thai politics. The former plays their part in policy-making. The latter remains powerful as the 2006 coup has shown. Also, Arghiros (2001, pp.20-21) suggests that ‘[I]t is evident that the rise of provincial businessmen-politicians has been at the expense of the power and control of the bureaucracy. ... [However,] relations between the rural majority

and the state are largely unaltered'. Thus, it is arguable that the characteristics of bureaucratic polity persist in Thai politics to a certain extent.

Not only the power structure of elites has been changed but the social structure on the ground has also been affected. By 1990s, the urban-rural divide in Thai politics has been convincingly argued to be a central variable by Laothamatas (1996, 2000) and become a conventional set of belief in Thai politics. In his seminal work, Laothamatas (2000) categorises Thais into two groups: city (*Muang*) and rural (*chonnabot*). Each of them has their own 'democracy': urban democracy versus rural democracy. Middle class in the city values political ideology and votes for the party regarding its policies. Differently, rural people remain in nepotism system and votes for those who are in their cycles of friends and families. Until now, Laothamatas's 'two democracies' theory remains an essential ground to understand Thai politics.

However, this urban-rural divide has been widely questioned (e.g. Kaewmano, 2011; Satitniramai, 2013b). Particularly, along with recent political changes e.g. Thaksinization (2001-2006), the 2006 military coup, and political unrests in the late 2000s, the debate on Thai political landscape has been moved forward to a colour war – confrontation between those who wore yellow (originally anti-Thaksin) and red (originally pro-Thaksin) shirts. Conflicts between yellow and red shirts need attention from those who are interested in Thai contemporary politics. The divide, and each group, is sophisticated and rooted in various causes.

At the beginning, red shirts were believed to be those who support Thaksin and yellow shirts were those who believe Thaksin corrupted and took absolute power (BBC News, 2012). Another belief which comes afterwards is that yellows are richer and better-off than reds. Besides, each group is labelled differently. For example, reds are labeled as 'new leftist (BBC News, 2012)' while yellows are 'ultra-nationalist (The Economist, 2011)' or 'royalists (Isra News, 2012)'. Still, as two groups have been developed (see Ewsriwong, 2010b, 2010c; Techapira, 2010a, 2010b), it becomes more and more difficult to generalize, for example, the red shirts as Thaksin's supporters since they could be 'red Thaksin,' 'red UDD (United Front for Democracy Against Dictatorship),' or 'independent red' (Prachathai, 2013).

Several researches attempt to identify who red and yellow shirts are. Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI) finds that reds comprise not only the poor and rural but also the rich and urban (see BangkokBizNews, 2011). It also finds that it is very likely that yellows are those who live in Bangkok at any income level and those who live out of Bangkok with high income. In his survey research, Satitniramai finds that red shirts tend to be farmers, labourers, and informal labour while yellow shirts tend to be government officials, public enterprise officers, and merchants (see Prachathai, 2010; Satitniramai, 2013a). Also, the yellows tend to be higher educated and earn more than the reds but, considering poverty line of Thailand's National Statistics Office, neither of them is poor. Concluding from the survey, however, he finds that neither yellows nor reds are better-off in any of the criteria. Both yellows and reds actually comprise groups of various socio-economic statuses.

Conflicts between yellows and reds have been investigated. As mentioned earlier, the divide starts from pro or against Thaksin. In their speech during the 2010 political unrest, some leaders of the UDD declared the 'class war'. They called themselves and the reds '*phrai* (peasants, serfs)' and the yellows '*ammat* (the noble, the lords)'. Seemingly, the leaders emphasized such war between rich (yellow) and poor (red) in attempt to gain support from large number of Thai population who are in poverty. Still, this appears to be a discourse constructed for political purposes. This discourse is argued by Teerawit (2010) emphasizing that the UDD's class war is different from the one in Marxist approaches. Based on a socio-economic perspective, TDRI research concludes that yellow-red conflicts are not 'class war' as both groups comprise the rich and poor (see BangkokBizNews, 2011). Similarly, in her fieldwork, Lueng-aramsri finds that 'being red' is not related to socio-economic class either (see Khaosod, 2011).

In fact, yellow-red conflicts are socio-political class struggles. As Winichakul (2010) further interprets the UDD's discourse that:

The UDD discourse of their struggles as the "*phrai*" against the "*ammat*" reveals as much as belies the configuration of class and hierarchy in Thai context. ... *Phrai* and its opposite, "*ammat*" (the

noble, the lords) in the UDD discourse targets the oppression and injustice due to social class and hierarchy such as the one in Thai political culture. The struggle of the Reds is a class war in this sense of the revolt of the downtrodden rural folks against the privileged social and political class, the “*ammāt*.”

Also, these conflicts could be the clash between the ‘old’ and ‘new’ middle class in Thailand. In his research, Mukdawijit suggests that those in rural areas have recently become the new middle class with more political awareness (see Prachathai, 2010). Concurrently, he suggests that yellows are the old middle class – urbanized, educated, economically well-off, and politically active. In contrast to a conventional belief that rural people are ignorant and poor, Mukdawijit evidently argues that these people earn more than the past and they are well-informed and educated. Some of them join the red shirts not because they are poor and simply bought off Thaksin’s populist policies. Rather, they are searching for their rights under democracy. His argument interestingly considers social, economic, and political aspects of class which could explain further who the red shirts are.

Precisely, yellows and reds cannot easily be put in an either-or categorization such as rich/poor, urban/rural, and pro/against Thaksin. Each group in fact comprises people from various socio-economic statuses sharing a particular set of political beliefs. Their conflicts are on the basis of socio-political rather than socio-economic class struggles. Interestingly, the two colours have rarely been attached to any particular province. When colouring the Thai map with red colour on the provinces in which Thaksin’s parties won the seats, the North and the Northeast become mostly red (see The Nation, 2011). Indeed, some got to believe that rural residents in the poor north and northeast regions supported Thaksin and the anti-Thaksin group tended to represent middle class Thais, the military, bureaucrats, intellectuals, and people in the south (Prasertsuk, 2010, p.203). Still, should there be an attempt to claim that the region or the province is red or yellow by one side, the other side in the region would appear to counter such claim (Mydans, 2008). In other words, the movement of



yellow and red simultaneously occurred, and sometimes clashed, in many provinces. Thus, it cannot be simply judged that a province is yellow or red.

As the Thaksinization went on, however, regional variation in Thai political landscape could not be ignored and this is related to the selection of the North in this research. Regarding recent election results, regional variation of Thai politics is prominent with two consistently pro-Thaksin regions (North, Northeast), the somewhat pro-Thaksin Central, the pro-Thaksin-turned-opposite Bangkok, and the consistently Thaksin-unwelcomed South. Three political parties (Thai Rak Thai, People's Power Party, Pheu Thai Party) considered as Thaksin's parties won most seats in the North in four recent general elections (see Table 2).

Table 2 Election results of Thaksin's parties in 2001, 2005, 2007 and 2011

Year	Party's title	Bangkok	Central	North	Northeast	South
2001	Thai Rak Thai (TRT)	28 (37)	51 (87)	34 (40)	73 (138)	1 (54)
2005	TRT	32 (37)	73 (89)	40 (40)	126 (136)	1 (54)
2007	People's Power Party (PPP)	6 (36)	38 (87)	36 (41)	75 (135)	1 (56)
2011	Pheu Thai Party (PTP)	9 (33)	47 (82)	35 (36)	104 (126)	0 (53)

x(y) = seats gained by Thaksin's parties in the region (total number of seats available in the region)

Source: Office of the Election Commission of Thailand, website

Some scholars refer to the north as crucial strategic point of Thaksin's political power (Pongsudhirak, 2008; A. Walker, 2007) perhaps because in recent elections Thaksin's political parties simply gained most votes in the North (McCargo & Ukrit, 2005). To stand on the firm ground of their political power, Thaksin's parties particularly need to maintain their strong bond with the North since the region is Thaksin's 'electoral heartland (A. Walker, 2007)'. One of the attempts is to strengthen the sense of localism associated between Thaksin and the region. As Walker (2008, p. 96) states, one of the popular Thaksin's party's slogans 'reflected this sentiment: The people of Chiangmai are proud. The Prime Minister is from Chiangmai. Thai Rak Thai is the only party.'

Thaksin's high popularity not only exists in the North but also the Northeast (A. Walker, 2007). After Thaksin took power in 2001, his popularity extended from the North to other regions particularly the Northeast. This is believed to be driven by the success of his populist policies e.g. '30-baht Universal Health Care Scheme', 'One Million, One Village' and his decisive and immediate actions on, for example, drug-dealing issue (Bangkok Post, 2005b, 2005c, 2005d). In the 2005 election, the TRT was hugely supported by both the North (Bangkok Post, 2005e; The Nation, 2004a) and the Northeast (The Nation, 2004b). Even after the 2006 coup, Thaksin's popularity remained strong in both regions (The Nation, 2007a).

Although not as much as in the North and the Northeast, the Central is also in favour of Thaksin's parties as they won more than half seats in the region in 2001, 2005, and 2011. Despite less than half seats in 2007, it is possible that some parts of the Central consistently support Thaksin's parties. In Bangkok, the TRT won most votes in 2001 and 2005. However, while Thaksin's popularity was increasing at the time, more and more people in Bangkok were questioning his real intention on populist policies and were suspicious of his corrupt behavior. Instead of resisting the 2006 coup claimed to eradicate the Thaksin regime, many Bangkokians welcomed the military intervention with flowers given to soldiers deployed on the streets. In 2007 and 2011, Thaksin's parties rarely gained their seats in Bangkok possibly because Bangkokians' fears of the return of Thaksin regime.

The South has rarely been part of Thaksin's popularity – his parties gained only one of 54, 54, 56 seats in 2001, 2005, 2007 respectively and none in 2011 – for several reasons. One reason, for example, could be his measures on the South insurgency and his decision on Tak Bai causing deaths of local people in Krue Se mosque (Bangkok Post, 2005a; the Nation, 2005b). Another reason could be that the South has always been in favour of the Democrat Party (The Nation, 2005a). Interestingly, this discussion of regional divide based on four election results (2001, 2005, 2007, 2011) shows that the North is distinctive as a strategic region in Thai politics. This leads to the region selection which will be further clarified in Chapter 4.

In conclusion, to understand Thai contemporary politics, there are two major issues and one political figure of concern at the national level. The first issue is that Thai political elites are not limited to bureaucrats any longer. Interest groups have become nuanced and that it is difficult to distinguish, for example, bureaucrats, politicians and business from one another. The second is that one must always bear in mind that Thai politics has been explained in two-tiered democracies – city and rural. This explanation remains applicable to the nation but the colour war, which instigated by Thaksin political presence, must also be taken into account. Current nationwide confrontation has been shifted from rural and poor versus rich and urban to reds versus yellows. These coloured groups are far too complicated to put into any particular socio-economic categories. To simplify, they are pressure groups sharing a set of political beliefs e.g. leftists for reds, nationalists for yellows.

Thaksin is definitely an unforgettable figure in Thai politics. To this date, he remains a debate topic in the country. Although academia suggests the debate go beyond the haunt of ‘Thaksin ghost (Ewsriwong, 2010)’, the possibilities remain questionable as he still plays a role in current politics. With all of these in mind, this research acknowledges that national politics could affect SIBD somehow. Perhaps either reds or yellows, whichever dominate the province’s politics, could drive the design of SIBD in the province. It is also possible that Thaksin or his governments would attempt to manipulate SIBD design.

However, there is no evidence particularly from the media that Thaksinization has affected SIBD. Thaksin’s governments did provide a universal healthcare scheme and gained more popularity from this policy. However, SIBD or even social insurance policy has rarely been touched by his governments. Being businessman by nature, perhaps nine million insured persons are a less interesting number than the number of other groups in the country e.g. farmers, hourly-paid workers. Once he attempted to intervene in social insurance policy: he thought of spending the money in the SSF but that is far from intervention in SIBD decision making. More likely, members of Thaksin’s parties could patronize SIBD through their political connections in the province. Discussions in following chapters will provide further

understanding and empirical findings on these assumptions. Particularly, Chapter 6 will assess evidence from the interviews related to these discussions.

### 3.2.1.2 *Provincial level*

As much of SIBD is organised at provincial level, the political and administrative traditions of this level need to be discussed. The current structure of Thailand's provincial administration was started from 1932 when the absolute monarchy was changed into a constitutional monarchy (see earlier discussion in Section 3.2). The most powerful political group (*Khana Ratsadon* or the People's Party) whose ideas became a blueprint of revolution were mostly educated in France. They brought political and administrative concepts from Europe, particularly France, to Thailand. For example, the group leader, Pridi Bhanomyong who after 1932 became a senior bureaucrat in the Ministry of Justice, took part in the drafting of several bills which were enacted afterwards. One of these bills was Administrative Structure Act 1933 which outlined Thailand's provincial administration.

Indeed, one may argue that the origin of contemporary Thai provincial administration should be dated back to the Rama V reign (1868-1910). During his reign, Rama V modernized the country under pressure from the governments of Britain and France. Ministries and departments were arranged in a central administration; while regional (*monton*) and provincial (*chung-wat*) territories were set and governed by noblemen appointed by the king. However, the 1932 reform is the ground for the current structure of Thai provincial administration. It terminated the traditional system established by Rama V. The layers of government were decreased to three-tiers central, provincial and local. Civil servants were appointed by the central government to be provincial governors to replace noblemen.

At the provincial level, although the Provincial Administrative Organisations (PAOs) are situated in each province, they rarely cooperate with the Provincial Administrative Units (PAUs). The PAOs, as local governments at the provincial level, are somewhat autonomous and have their own personnel and budget; whilst the PAUs as branches of central departments rigorously follow the decision and

regulations of the central offices. For example, the Chiang Mai SSRO as a provincial office of the SSO is mainly responsible for benefit delivery. It is not authorised to amend any rules or regulations. Contrarily, the Chiang Mai PAO could design their provincial policy and collect industrial tax imposition. This structure of Thai provincial administration is explained further by Arghiros (2001, p. 21):

‘Compared to many states,...the Thai state is extremely strong and has effective reach into all provinces and districts, no matter how far they are from Bangkok. Despite never having been colonized, Thailand's provincial administration is reminiscent of the colonial apparatus of administrations established by the British in India and the French in Indochina. It was designed to ensure effective central control of rural areas... This heritage goes some way to explaining why...Thailand's experience with democratic decentralisation shares so much in common with former colonies elsewhere.’

The governor is similar to the Prefect in France in terms of being ‘the local command over all administrative activity over a given area (Panter-Brick, 1951, p. 245)’ which in Thailand is the province. However, the French influence only remained significant to Thai provincial administration until 2001. When Thaksin became the Prime Minister in that year, he declared the policy of regional empowerment which transformed the governors into the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs). After this policy was implemented in 2003, technically the governors became directly under the control of the Prime Minister since Thaksin could relocate them at his discretion.

Provincial politics of course involves more than professional bureaucracy (e.g. provincial governor and those who work in the PAUs). Being appointed from Bangkok, provincial bureaucrats need local connections to facilitate their work. These connections are links with politicians and business elites in the province. Co-operation between them and bureaucrats are not new but what is new is the dominance of these provincial elites in the relationships (Ockey, 2000, p. 89). As mentioned earlier, they potentially emerge as new powerful elites in Thai contemporary politics, either at national or local level. Generally, provincial elites

comprise politicians and wealthy businessmen. Firstly, politicians in a province are not only ‘national’ but also ‘provincial’ and ‘local’ politicians. National politicians are those elected in general elections. To survive in any case, they have to channel the taxpayers’ money back to their home constituencies (Siamwalla, 2002, p. 127). For example, Banharn who became the prime minister in 1994 channelled ‘massive road construction projects’ to Suphanburi, his home constituency, transformed the province from remote area to a ‘modern’ province and apparently he gained huge local-level support (Nishizaki, 2008).

Provincial politicians are those elected for PAO councils. Local politicians are those elected at sub-provincial level to administer either municipalities or TAOs. Many times provincial and local politicians are altogether perceived as local politicians (*nak-gaan-Muang thong-thin*). However, the clear line between them can be drawn regarding their constituencies: provincial politicians from provincial elections, local politicians from local (city or sub-district) elections. Interestingly, candidates at both levels are more likely to succeed if they are from affluent or elitist family or have some sort of connections with national politicians. As Haque (2010, p. 684) states that cronyism is evident in ‘the results of 2003–2004 local election in which the MPs and their relatives constituted 18.67 percent of the elected PAO Chairmen, while the remaining 81.33 percent of these Chairmen were represented by the entrenched politicians who served under the old system and were closed to local MPs’. In this sense, it is interesting that sub-national politics seemingly becomes a nursery for yet-to-be national politicians.

Secondly, business elites in the province, or *Chao Pho* (the Godfathers), are those with money and power (see particularly McVey, 2000). As Thailand grew into capitalist state, McVey (2000, p.16) observes that cash ‘has become the basis of provincial leaders’ followings, as money become more important in people’s lives’. Phongpaichit and Baker (2000) defines *Chao Pho* as ‘provincial business and local influence’ who may rise from two forms of business – public works contracting and illegal enterprise e.g. gambling, smuggling. Slightly different, Ockey (2000, p.81) explains the term *Chao Pho* as: those involved in crime (the closest meaning to the

English-language godfather), those whose fortune activity is legal but their methods are corrupt; and, those with decisive, charismatic and generous style of leadership. Chantornvong (2000) also discusses local godfathers (*chao pho*) as those who have a character of *nak leng* and *phu mi itthiphon*. A *nak leng*, as Chantornvong (p.54) suggests, is knowledgeable about or highly preoccupied with something and has to be daring, courageous, honest, and manly. However, a *nak leng*'s influence is only limited to his immediate community. Another type of *chao pho* is *phu mi itthiphon* (man of influence) who can denote power and exert pressure over government.

The term *chao pho* seems varied in its meaning but its core concept refers to those affluent and influential people who can put pressures on government, at whichever level, to a certain extent. Some of them may become politicians and some may remain in business with regular interventions in the government's policy-making. Still, it should be noted that *chao pho* is not something newly emerged from Thailand's recent economic development. As McVey (2000, p.14) stresses, the *chao pho*'s presence 'draws attention to certain persistent facts of Thai life: that patronage is important; that justice and protection are to be found more in personal relationships than in the law. They remind us that officials have high status but may in fact be irrelevant to power, or may wield power but by no means in the interest of the state'. Thus, this reinforces what Arghiros (2001) suggests that while Thai politics at the national level has been changed its provincial politics remains largely unchanged.

### 3.2.1.3 Local level

At the local level, four types of local governments – municipality, Subdistrict Administrative Organisation (SAO), Bangkok, Pattaya – share the same politico-administrative structure (see Figure 3.1). The type of local government varies by population and tax imposition capacity. Bangkok and Pattaya are special areas due to their high density of population and high capacity for tax imposition. In comparison to SAOs, municipalities are higher in both terms. Although local governments are supposed to be autonomous, there are some employees assigned by central government in order to support the performance of local governments. Previously,

employees in all sections were assigned from the MoI but, recently, local governments recruit all staff themselves, with the exceptions of the Chief Administrator and the Deputy Chief positions.

In the past, local governments in Thailand were expected to play as role of a local administrator (Krannich, 1979). The elected local politicians were expected to perform housekeeping functions (the role of *pau baan* – father of the house) rather than playing politics (see Krannich, 1979, p.512). This situation has recently changed. Local politicians increasingly not only look after their residents but also relatively more involved in political negotiations among interest groups. In an attempt to enhance authority and autonomy of local government, the Plan and Processes of Decentralisation Act, 1999, was enacted. However, although personnel and financial autonomy has been legislated, it has been implemented slowly for many reasons e.g. political instabilities, the 1997 economic crisis, and central government's attempt to maintain control (see Puang-Ngam, 2000).

### **3.2.2 Administrative reforms: contexts, history and recent policies**

To illustrate Thai administrative reforms, this section is presented in three analytical frameworks: international contexts, historical background and the late 1990s decentralisation. While the first two topics outline contexts and background, the last topic draws the focus of administrative reform in this research. Both the timeframe and the reform policies of interest are specified.

#### **3.2.2.1 International contexts**

Recent administrative reform efforts in various countries are predominantly based on managerial approach or the New Public Management (Polidano & Hulme, 1999). England stands out as 'the model case in terms of the reception and implementation of the neo-managerial types of reform of the late twentieth century' with New Zealand equally accepted as another model (Peters & Pierre, 2003, p. 467). Thailand applies some of the lessons learned from the models and other Western nations (Haque, 2007). Four sets of factors of administrative reform in developing countries – political, economic, strategic, and international – are unsurprisingly applicable to



the Thai case (Schneider & Heredia, 2003, p. 2). Political factors are resulted from ‘a process of re-writing the contract between elected politicians and bureaucratic officials (Haggard, 1995, cited in Schneider and Heredia, 2003, p.2)’. Economic factors include fiscal crises and constraints pressuring government to reform. Strategic factors refer to strategic choices of state reformers, such as policy design and coalition building. International factors are particularly international financial institutions which can have influence in domestic reform initiatives through aid conditionalities.

Although never been under direct colonial rule, Thailand have been through the three stages of administrative evolution – traditional bureaucratic model, developmental model, and NPM model – similar to many developing countries (Haque, 2007, p. 1300). Thai administration evolved in line with the traditional bureaucratic model when Western countries imposed colonial rules on their neighbouring countries. The developmental model was adopted along with the aid from Western countries in 1950s. Similar to most developing countries, it began to pursue state-led socioeconomic development, and restructured their bureaucracy in favour of development-oriented public administration. The NPM model was introduced in recent years.

In the past, administrative reform efforts in Thailand had been mostly unsuccessful with similar reasons to some South Asian countries (see Khan, 2002) and Arab states (see Jreisat, 1988). The reform lacked of political leadership, strong pressure groups favouring reform, and a democratic governance system (Khan, 2002, p. 73). It experienced ‘conventional limitations of bureaucracy, the copying of Western administrative rationality in form if not in substance, and insufficient attention paid to traditional, cultural, religious, and political contexts of administration’ (Jreisat, 1988, p. 85). Recently, with political and international factors, the efforts in Thailand became relatively successful in terms of structural and procedural changes. As a result of the 1997 economic crisis, Thailand received aid from the IMF and World Bank and reformed its financial and administrative system. In 2000s, Thaksin’s political leadership managed to restructure Thai administration based on the NPM

model. However, similar to some Southeast Asian countries, it has not been easy to apply NPM and see drastic change of market-oriented administration in the state-centric structure (Haque, 2007, p. 1313). While political and international factors reinforce the reform, bureaucratic politics still plays substantial roles in the reform design.

To understand administrative reform further, one needs to understand the nature of politics and administration in the country. The Thai administration could be summarized as below,

‘Since the late nineteenth century, Thai administration had been highly centralized. Policies flowed from Bangkok to field offices, where officials collided with the local agents of other ministries. Policy coordination either at the center or at local levels was weak. ... Within ministries, departments retained autonomy and often failed to work with other departments.’ (Unger, 2003, p. 188)

Also, Thai bureaucracy encompasses six cultural traits: hierarchy; personalism; arrogance and disdain for outsiders; paternalism; security; and the pursuit of *sanuk* [having fun] (Chai-anan, 1987, cited in Painter, 2006, p. 29)’. Although it has been reformed under the NPM umbrella in an attempt to lessen these traits, they still seem to be embedded in Thai bureaucracy. Similarly, Unger (2003, p. 190) suggests that ‘many of the problems that beset the Thai bureaucracy reflect its Weberian features: red tape, excessive rigidity, and a lack of accountability.’ Concurrently, instable Thai politics is characterized by patron-client relationship (J. C. Scott, 1972), money politics (Phongpaichit & Baker, 1995), urban-rural democracy gaps (Laothamatas, 1996) and business politics (Phongpaichit & Baker, 2004). It is not uncommon that politics and bureaucracy attempt to dominate each other in administrative reform strategy (Aucoin, 1990). Thailand is one example of such situations (Bowornwathana, 1994). Particularly, Schneider and Heredia (2003, p. 3) suggest that the prospects for administrative reform in Thailand are dim as the bureaucratic and political elites are fused.

Moreover, administrative reforms are implemented in Thailand in various forms and approaches. Similarly to many developing countries, recent administrative reform in Thailand not only relates to New Public Management approach (NPM) but also embraces other strands of reform which are not related to the NPM. These non-NPM reforms include capacity-building, controlling corruption, political decentralisation and local empowerment (Polidano & Hulme, 1999, p. 124). However, it is not the purpose of this research to look at all strands elaborately. Only two types of reform are of interest in this research. One is the NPM reform which directly affects social insurance administration. Another is political decentralisation which provides understanding in changes of political power of stakeholders in provincial SIBD.

### *3.2.2.2 Historical background*

The history of Thai administrative reform has been consistently and extensively reviewed (e.g. Bowornwathana, 2008; Connors, 1999; Hewison, 1993; McCargo & Pathmanand, 2005; Ockey, 2004; Painter, 2006). To summarise, Thailand's administrative reform can be explained with reference to three key moments of political change: the 1932 regime shift, the 1997 people's constitution, and the 2001 political arrival of Thaksin as the prime minister. The 1932 overthrow of the absolute monarchy could be identified as the beginning of Thai democratization (as discussed earlier in Section 3.2). However, it 'had not been a popular uprising, but an uprising of the bureaucracy, for the bureaucracy (Ockey, 2004, p. 143)'. According to Bowornwathana (1994), the Thai polity had been more bureaucratic than democratic as politicians had failed to institutionalise the control over the bureaucracy (p.159). It was 'traditionally dominated by bureaucrats but with cycles of military rule and representative government (p.157)'. Therefore, after the abolition of absolute monarchy, Thailand was labelled as a 'bureaucratic polity' where bureaucrats were the most powerful actors in politics (Riggs, 1966). Although this concept is declared to be dead by many scholars (see the full list in Ockey, 2004, p.143), it 'continues to haunt scholars of Thai studies (Ockey, 2004, p. 143)' and thus, it remains part of administrative characteristics of Thailand.

In 1997, the people's Constitution was inaugurated causing dramatic political and administrative changes in Thailand (Bowornwathana, 2006; Connors, 1999; Montesano, 2002; Ockey, 2004). It was amended in 2007 by the civilian government being appointed after the 2006 military coup. It aims to reduce the power of 'strong prime minister' which was implicitly empowered in the 1997 Constitution. Particularly, it is believed to prevent Thailand from sustaining a strong prime minister like Thaksin. Also, as usually happened after successful coups, the existing constitution would be terminated and the new one would be drafted to exempt all charges relating to prosecution of the coup. However, most contents in the 2007 Constitution remain the same as its original version. Despite being replaced by the 2007 Constitution, the 1997 Constitution has been considered as 'a central feature of Thai political life (Montesano, 2002, p. 171)' and culminated in 'the belief that effective constitutional engineering can overcome all the problems in Thai politics (Ockey, 2004, p. 153)'. Also, as Bowornwathana (2006, p. 30) states, 'Thailand's long tradition of a centralised system of government has been shaken, at least on paper, by ... the 1997 Constitution. ... [Accordingly,] the state shall give autonomy to localities in accordance with the principle of self-government and the will of the people'. However, this goal is yet to be reached due to Thaksin's administrative reform.

Thaksin's government tenure is sometimes termed by scholars (e.g. Bowornwathana, 2004; McCargo & Ukrit, 2005; Mutebi, 2004b; Painter, 2006; Pasuk & Baker, 2004) as 'Thaksinization'. His administration (2001-2006) 'has reversed the process of state autonomisation by introducing administrative reform that further consolidates political power and government authority in the hands of a single person: Prime Minister Thaksin himself (Bowornwathana, 2005, p. 38)'. He applied business concepts into Thai administration using the approach called 'A Country is My Company' approach (see Bowornwathana, 2004). He rewarded and relocated politicians and bureaucrats as if he was the super CEO of Thailand company. Consequently, under Thaksinization, the Thai polity has been less influenced by bureaucrats than in other periods.

Acknowledging that most powers remained in the hands of bureaucrats and ministers, Thaksin attempted to establish a more centralised and politically-managed system of 'spoils distribution' and to 'break down existing forms of bureaucratic power, rather than merely to manage them for his own ends' (Painter, 2006, p. 34). In 2002, Thaksin inaugurated the Bureaucratic Restructuring and the National Administration Acts considered as 'Thailand's biggest bureaucratic shakeup in more than a century (Mutebi, 2003, p. 107). Thus, bureaucratic power has been dispersed along with the intervention of Thaksin and his cliques – either business partners or politicians – in politics. However, according to Ockey (2004), while capitalists have been more involved in Thai politics; 'bureaucrats retain considerable leverage in their relationship with politicians (p.147)' as 'the power of the bureaucracy was strengthened as some of its members [e.g. technocrats, autonomous organisations] were given additional power over members of the regime (p.153)' under the 1997 Constitution. However, Thaksin was ousted in 2006 by the military coup whose claim was to abolish corruption under Thaksin's regime.

There might be the question whether the 2006 coup should be included as key political changes to Thailand's administrative reform. It is apparent, however, that this incident froze Thailand's political development. Instead of moving forward, political struggles after 2006 have been just pulling-and-hauling among interest groups. Although Thaksin's government was officially ousted by the military coup in 2006, the Thaksinization is still influential in Thai politics and administration. Some political struggles and turmoil after the 2006 coup (e.g. the clashes between the United Front for Democracy Against Dictatorship (UDD) and the People's Allies for Democracy (PAD) in 2008) are examples of how Thaksin remains powerful in the country. Also, after four civilian governments during the period of 2006-2011<sup>6</sup>, the government elected in 2011 was run by Yingluck Shinawatra, Thaksin's sister, who is believed to be under his supervision. Thus, it is fair to say that, until now,

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<sup>6</sup> These include the governments of: Surayuth (October 2006 – January 2008); Samak (January – September 2008; Somchai (September – December 2008); and, Abhisit (December 2008 – August 2011).

administrative reform in Thailand has remained largely the same since Thaksinization.

### *3.2.2.3 The late 1990s decentralisation*

This research focuses on the decentralisation after the promulgation of the 1997 Constitution which from now will be termed as ‘the late 1990s decentralisation’. Indeed, Thaksinization has caused enormous political changes in Thailand and it could be a critical point of change for decentralisation in Thailand. However, he has actually drawn the system back in a centralising direction. This is a case of ‘old wine in new bottles’ as, for example, Thaksin recentralised the power in the guise of a managerialist approach (Mutebi, 2004a). It somehow made the country go backward to a strong patron-client society. In contrast, the basic dynamic for imposing attempts to decentralisation and diversity, which draw on international norms, appears to continue to be the 1997 Constitution. This Constitution fundamentally changed both the political and bureaucratic systems of the country. It emphasised, at least on paper, citizen’s political participation, decentralisation, and customer-oriented public services. Therefore, this research considers the 1997 Constitution, instead of Thaksinization, as the scaffolding of Thailand’s decentralisation. In other words, it remains the reference point to which Thaksin has reacted.

Decentralisation in this research is defined as ‘any transfer of the authority [and resource] to plan, make decisions and manage public functions (Conyers, 1983, p. 101)’. It refers to the administrative reform comprising of: decentralisation from central department (the SSO) to its field offices (the SSROs), decentralisation from central government to a prefect in provincial administration (provincial governor), and decentralisation from central government to sub-provincial governments (local governments). Firstly, in relation to decentralisation in SIA, the SSO is obliged to give more power and money to the SSRO as a result of post-1997 administrative reform which is influenced by New Public Management (NPM) and Good Governance (GG) approaches. This field will be labelled as ‘decentralised SIA’ in this research.

Secondly, in decentralised provincial administration, the central government is required to provide more money for the provincial governor (see Decree of Good Governance, 2003). Central departments and ministries are required to give particular authorities to the governor. This policy of Integrative Provincial Administration (IPA), is based on a business, or managerialist, approach (the governor is the CEO of the province). It is designed and implemented by Thaksin to recentralise control over the provinces. Thirdly, in decentralised local administration, central government is required to give both money and power to local governments. This, hereafter labelled ‘localisation’, is a longer process than the first two and can be traced back to before the 1997 Constitution. For example, the Tambon Administrative Organisation Act was enacted in 1993 to empower the SAOs in terms of authority and resource (see Krongkaew, 1995). However, the 1997 Constitution has more impacts on localisation. It is expected to secure that ‘[I]n the long run, autonomisation of local governments will have a significant impact on the unitary administrative system of the Thai Government (Bowornwatthana, 2006)’.

It should be noted that these three areas of decentralisation are still developing. As Bowornwatthana (2000, p. 395) suggests,

‘...one has to keep in mind that Thailand has a long way to go. Governance reform for a civil polity has just started. Whether the change process will be gradual or volatile depends on Thailand's ability to blend traditional elite preferences with the new governance values.’

Therefore, the late 1990s decentralisation is considered as an impetus to diversified SIBD. On the one hand, it brings in a complexity of SIA in particular along with political and administrative changes in general. Being more complex, central-local relation in SIA has been relatively tense. On the other hand, it gives more resources and authority to the SSRO. Provincial governors and local governments have become alternative resource providers. Also, the bureaucratic reform grants more authorities to regional offices of any central department which in this case are the SSROs.

Last but not least, two issues should be reinstated. Firstly, this research focuses on administrative reform in decentralization form which is broader than the NPM-based

reform practices. NPM is undeniably the outstanding approach of the reform in Thailand. It particularly affects the procedure of service delivery at the provincial level. However, the aim of this research is to study the diversity of SIBD which appears to be a result of not only the NPM but also political decentralisation. Decentralisation is thus referred to the reform in SIA, ProA and LoA. Secondly, this research immediately searches for the association between decentralisation and diversity of service delivery. It did not start from the extent to which the reform exists (already argued in Krongkaew, 1995; Rohitarachoon & Hossain, 2012) or whether public responsiveness of government agency is actually a result of decentralization (already argued in Haque, 2010).

Perhaps some question the result of Thailand's administrative reform. As Jreisat (2002, p. 163) states, '[A]dministrative reform in developing countries is often described in pessimistic terms, not only because the results are sparse but also because the options for reform policies are increasingly narrowing.' However, as Kickert suggests, this research would argue that:

‘It is ... too ‘pessimistic’ to judge these small, incremental and gradual changes as ‘almost nothing’. It is unnecessarily ‘pessimistic’ to have the dichotomous view that either institutional patterns remain unchanged, or there is an abrupt radical change. ... this all-or-nothing dichotomy is not a fruitful view of the complex empirical reality of reforms (Kickert, 2011, p. 803).’

### **3.3 Social insurance in Thailand**

Social insurance policy in Thailand could be broadly understood using two time periods: policy introduction (1930s-1989) and policy implementation (1990-present). In addition, the introduction could be sub-divided into three time periods: introducing social insurance (1930s-1958), the first launch (1954-1957), and the negotiations (1958-1989). Originally, the concept of social security was firstly introduced into Thailand in the 1930s (Department of Public Affairs, 1960), after the political change from absolute monarchy to constitutional monarchy, but it was not



adopted as a policy because of the political instability. In 1940, the then Prime Minister decided to establish social security policies which he prioritised as part of the implementation of poverty alleviation measures. In order to achieve this, the Department of Public Affairs (DPA) was established under the Ministry of Interior (MoI). Two years later, Thailand's first Social Security Act (SSA) was drafted and enacted in 1954. Although its name is 'social security', its details refer to 'social insurance' because it is the law regulating a contributory system under the risk-pooling principle<sup>7</sup>.

The concept of social insurance was ineffectively portrayed to Thais and failed to be adopted as a policy before 1954 (Department of Public Affairs, 1960, p.8). However, despite being negatively criticized by stakeholders - e.g. workers, employers, private insurance companies, medical staffs (Department of Public Affairs, 1960, p.8), the first draft of Thailand's SSA was adopted in 1954. The first SSA was enacted and a new organisation – Division of Social Security – was established as a particular government unit operationalising social security. However, by 1957, the parliament was forced to stall its implementation because of increasing resistance. This period of 1954-1957 is therefore named here 'the first launch'.

Between 1958 and 1989, negotiations between actors occurred in order to re-legitimise the social security approach. Particularly between 1981 and 1988, several social security bills were drafted, but no decisive steps were taken. With the rapidly changing political, economic and social conditions in the 1980s, pressure built for the government to pass a social security law and in 1988, five social insurance bills were submitted to the parliament for consideration. A parliamentary committee merged the five drafts into a single draft and despite the opposition from the senate, the parliament unanimously passed the Act on 11 July 1990. The political decision was a historical event in the country's long struggle for a social security law (Schramm,

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<sup>7</sup> In Thai, the two terms are also differently written. While 'social security' is literally '*kwam munkong tang sungkom*'; 'social insurance' is '*prakan sungkom*'. However, the ambiguity remains as the government often translate the term '*prakan sungkom*' into 'social security'. Thus, it should be noted that 'social insurance' will be referred to '*prakan sungkom*' throughout this dissertation except for the organisation title e.g. Social Security Office, Social Security Regional Office.

2001, p. 3). The SSA was revised, pushed forward by a group of MPs, and finally implemented in 1990, three decades after the first draft.

Subsequently, the implementation period occurred from 1990 until the present and serves as the main focus for this research. After the prolonged struggle of policy introduction, Thailand's social insurance policy was eventually implemented in 1990. A new organisation, the Social Security Department, was founded in the Ministry of Interior with the basic missions were to change people's perception towards social insurance, and to establish the working process of three benefit deliveries: injury and sickness, invalidity, and maternity (Chittichanont, 1996). Responsibility for the Thai social insurance system has remained with the Department ever since. However, during an administrative reform in 1993, it was reorganised into a unit under the control of the Ministry of Labour (MoL), namely the Social Security Office (SSO). In addition, the SSO's regional offices (SSROs) were established to deliver the SIBs in a uniform manner nationwide. In other words, to deliver the SIBs, each SSRO inevitably operates in compliance with three systems: budget, planning, and administrative.

Although social insurance has been implemented in Thailand for two decades (1990-present), its effectiveness has been questionable. The SSO indicates that the obstacles include; inertia of bureaucracy, lack of specialists and competent personnel, and a rigid budget system (Srichatrapimook, 2004). However, Sri-Dhamruk (1993) argues that, in fact, after the SSA was implemented, the problems of social insurance provision are more a matter of complexity of: service procedure, low quality of service in the incorporated hospitals, and employers' avoidance of paying contributions and work welfare provisions. Additionally, since the SSO is in charge of managing the SSF budget which totaled 364,973 million Baht (£7,299,460,000) at the end of 2005, sometimes politicians show policy intent to spend the money on purposes different from social insurance objectives (BangkokBizNews, 2009). Not only do policymakers try to redirect the money, but bureaucrats in the SSO may inefficiently spend some of the SSO's budget, for instance on business trips to foreign countries (KomChadLuek, 2007).

There have been several attempts to identify causes of such inefficiency. Some analysts indicate that the bureaucratic structure of the SSO is a root cause of management problems and suggest that the SSO be reformed into an autonomous organisation (Prachachat Thurakit, 2007). The SSO also presented the idea of employing business professionals to manage the fund (Reecharoen, 1997). Nonetheless, the idea of decentralising service delivery and authority to the established local governments has never been discussed directly. Rather, although it is not an intent to reform the SIB delivery system, the SSRO has indirectly gained more freedom due to the amendment of the Constitution in 1997 and the enactment of the Decree of Good Governance in 2003. The Constitution 1997 emphasised decentralisation and appeared to support accountability, transparency, open government and emphasising a less important central government (Bowornwattana 2008). The Decree of Good Governance, 2003, specified that delivery agencies must have enough jurisdiction in performing their duties and should, whenever appropriate, cooperate with other agencies in providing the services. Thus, interestingly, the way the SSROs implement the decentralisation policy is a key part of analysis in this research.

### **3.3.1 International principles and contexts**

Social insurance in Thailand is based on the general international principles: the system is contributory and compulsory; a contribution fund has been established, namely the Social Security Fund (SSF), and the excess amount after paying benefits will be invested in the financial market; benefit rates are income-related and depend on contributory records; and, industrial injury benefit is paid by employers only (TDRI, 2006). Although the social insurance systems of several countries were reviewed before the system was established (Department of Public Welfare 1960; Department of Public Welfare, 1960; Division of Social Security, 1962), Thailand's social security administration seems to be most influenced by the structure of German system (see Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1992). A special unit (SSO) with the tri-partite board (consisting of employers, employees and the government) is

responsible for the system, and its branches (SSROs) are responsible for benefit delivery.

In comparison to East Asian welfare state (see Peng & Wong, 2010), Thai social insurance is inclusive and individualistic. Firstly, social insurance in Thailand has become more inclusive than the past. It has gradually been expanded to include workers in other employment sectors and self-employed workers by providing voluntary social insurance. However, while its pattern of development is similar to Peng and Wong's 'inclusive' category (Japan, Korea and Taiwan) the reasons for social insurance enhancement in Thailand are not democracy and national homogeneity as suggested by Peng & Wong (2010, p. 660). While the bottom-up democratic political pressure compelled the government to enlarge social insurance in the three sample countries, inclusive social insurance in Thailand is mainly driven by the government. Secondly, Thai society seems to be more individualistic due to the strong belief in Buddhism<sup>8</sup> (Piker, 1968) which might imply that Thailand should follow the pattern of individualistic social protection. However, Thailand's social insurance differs greatly from this pattern as the sense of 'we-ness' in Thailand is weaker (see Piker, 1968) than the three countries (Hong Kong, Singapore, China) in Peng and Wong's individualistic category.

Statistically, Thailand seems to be more typical of Asian developing countries in terms of: low social insurance coverage and low public spending on social security (see Table 3.1). Although the coverage of Thailand's social insurance is expanding, it is still very low compared to other countries. In Southeast Asia, Singapore's social security covers 58.1% of the labour force which is the highest number of the region; the smallest number, around 10%, is in Indonesia; Thailand's figure is 19.5% which is the second smallest (Asher, 2002). However, in 2008, the number of insured persons in Thailand increased to 9.3 million equating to 25% of the total number of workforce (37.15 million) (Academic Division of Department of Employment, 2009) and reflecting the expansion of social insurance coverage. Finally, although public

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<sup>8</sup> Piker (1968) suggests that Buddhist society is individualistic based on the teaching in *Dhamapada* (cited in Piker, 1968, p.781), "By oneself is evil done; By oneself one suffers; By oneself evil is left undone; By oneself one is purified".

spending on social security in Thailand is increasing, it is still comparatively low, 3.7% of GDP was spent on social security in Thailand (Croissant, 2004, p. 508).

Table 3.1 Social insurance coverage and public spending on social security in Southeast Asia

Country	Social insurance coverage* (% of total labour force)	Public spending on social security** (% of total central government expenditure)		
	2000	1972-9	1980-9	1990-2000
Singapore	58.1	1.56	1.47	2.84
Malaysia	54.7	3.11	3.99	4.50
Philippines	20-25	2.36	1.46	2.79
Thailand	19.5	3.79	3.06	3.74
Indonesia	10	n/a	n/a	n/a

\* Asher (2000, p.74)

\*\* Croissant (2004, p.508)

### 3.3.2 Political-economic background

As discussed earlier, there are three levels of administration – central, provincial, local – in Thailand. However, in this section, the background will be further explained at only two levels - national and provincial – because local administration is hardly related to SIA. Local governments are authorised to deliver social assistance, not social insurance benefits. They are involved in SIA only if the SSRO requests it.

#### 3.3.2.1 National-level

At the national level, the Thai social insurance system has been shaped regarding the ILO principle. It is thus similar to the typical social security administrative structure suggested by Dixon (1999, p. 5). Also, Thailand's national SIA could be considered as a hybrid of the German and British systems. According to the pre-1990 documents which framed social insurance in Thailand, social insurance in Germany was identified as the very first model of social insurance (Department of Public Affairs, 1960, 1970) and Britain considered as one of the best social security system in the

world (Department of Public Affairs, 1960, 1970; Division of Social Security, 1973). Undeniably, the Thai system evolved learning from many more lessons from other countries around the world (e.g. Division of Social Security, 1962) but these two countries' concepts appear at its core. Consequently, in 1990, a tripartite board (Social Security Committee: SSC) has been set as the policy maker of social insurance with fifteen members (five government representatives, five employer representatives, and five employee representatives). Also, the SSO has been established as a policy implementer.

In principle, each sector – government, employer, employee – in the tripartite board is expected to be active. Ideally, according to the German principle, SIA should be self-administered and depoliticized (Clasen, 1994). Employers and employees should be the main actors responsible for the administration and the state should facilitate SIA with the least possible intervention. However, the Thai system does not function in this way for many reasons which will be clarified in the following order: government, employer, and employee.

Firstly, the government appears to dominate the tripartite board. Similar to other Southeast Asian countries, SIA in Thailand was the result of a combination of politics and the market but the Thai government had relatively 'not left all their fates to the market [i.e. employers, employees] (Crone, 1993, p. 64)'. The government hardly implements or listens to suggestions from the SSC members (Buddhadilok, 2003, p. 59). Further, the government perceived social insurance as another financial resource (ASTV, 2006) and sometimes suggested policies which misused social insurance contributions e.g. buying rice for insured persons (BangkokBizNews, 2009), supporting social assistance (Daily News, 2011) or clearing public teachers' debts (ASTV, 2008). Instead of facilitating SIA, thus, the government overlooks the SSC's authorities and even takes over decision making on the SSF spending.

Like the British system, SIA is designated to a single government department. The Social Security Office (SSO), under the control of the Ministry of Labour (MoL), is a government organisation which is responsible for the day-to-day functioning of SIA. Their public image is believed to be stable (*mun-khong*) and reliable (*na-chue-thue*)

(Singkiphorn et al, 2007) but they, as an administrator of the system, have occasionally been questioned on their transparency (see Matichon, 2011; Muennoo, 2010; Thairath, 2011). Some of their spending plan was criticized as overspending, such as 100 million baht (£2m) for SSO public relations (Matichon, 2008), 16 million baht (£320,000) for value-added ID card project (Charoenwongsak, 2010), 100 million baht (£2m) for the SSC election (Matichon, 2008), or 2,800 million baht (£56m) for MIS installation (PostToday, 2007). These government interventions in social insurance seem complied with what Hewison (2005) suggests, Thailand encompasses the characteristics of ‘crony capitalism’ which is referred to ‘a range of meanings – weak corporate and state governance, inadequate institutions, moral hazard, corruption/rent-seeking/patronage and resource misallocation (p.311)’.

Secondly, it is necessary to understand the role of employers in Thailand in general before discussing their roles in social insurance in particular. This could be explained in two separated time; before and after 1997 (see Figure 3.2), the year in which East Asian economic crisis<sup>9</sup> occurred. This crisis not only impacted economic and social development of the country but also challenged business sector to rethink about their roles in politics (Hewison, 2005). Before 1997, employers or business sector played a role as merchants following the government’s policy and financially supporting political parties (see Baker & Phongpaichit, 2009). After 1997, their role has changed into businessmen who are sometimes directly involved in national politics and policymaking. These businessmen accumulated wealth either legally or illegally and had influence on provincial politics. The articles in McVey’s (2000) discuss their roles in at least two respects. One considers them as Chao Pho (godfather) whose sources of power varied. Another considers them as emerging provincial elites whose influence may not be limited in a particular province. Then, it went further in 2001 when Thaksin Shinnawatra, a telecommunication tycoon, got his landslide victory in the general election. The new Thai political era – the ‘business of politics’ (Pasuk & Baker, 2004) – had been ignited and the business sector has not been easily separated

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<sup>9</sup> This economic crisis is sometimes referred to as ‘Tom Yum Kung crisis’ since it started from the collapse of financial market in Thailand.

from politics since then. In other words, ‘capitalists were buying influence and taking over political parties (Connors, 1999, p. 204)’.

Figure 3.2 Employers in Thailand

Before 1997	After 1997
Merchant	Businessman
Follow the government’s policy	Participate in policymaking
Financially support political parties	Become a politician

Employers are involved in SIA in two ways: direct and indirect. Directly, five employer representatives are nominated and elected by members of employer organisations. It is unclear how these representatives perform their roles in the Social Security Committee (SSC) but it is likely that the employer representatives are not influential to the SSC’s decision making because of two reasons (Buddhadilok, 2003, p. 60). One is that they may focus too much on their personal interests so that the government discerns their opinions. Another is that they may not have enough related knowledge or experience to get their voices heard by other SSC members. Indirectly, employers can choose to either pressure the government’s policymaking through their interest groups or become a policymaker – or politician – themselves. As mentioned earlier, employers who become national politicians could be influential on SIA through the government. Although it is difficult to conclude whether this actually happens, it is worth noting that employers could employ their political power over SIA.

Thirdly, employee organisations, i.e. trade unions, in Thailand are not as strong as in Germany due to historical and cultural development. Culturally, a sense of gratitude (*ka-tan-yu*) has been strongly emphasised in Thai society (Arghiros, 2001). Employees are expected to be grateful to the employers who are their job and welfare



providers. Before the revolution in 1932, workers in noble families were considered as dependents. Although liberty and freedom were emphasised after the abolition of absolute monarchy in 1932, this perception was still embedded in the society. The situation was slightly changed in 1973 when student movements arose. Such movements included cooperation between the two interest groups – students and labours – which aimed for basic social welfare and the victory of this demonstration temporarily strengthened labour movements. However, as Ramesh (2000, p. 544) suggests, ‘trade unions have played only a peripheral role in the social policy process in Thailand because of government – and employer – sponsored intimidation and low union density (3% of industrial workforce in 1991) and their own internal fragmentation’. Also, the thankful perception of gratitude remains strong particularly in rural area of the country.

Further, the return of the 1973 exiled Prime Minister to Thailand, Thanom Kittikajon, in 1976 started another period of political turmoil. This hampered the democratization and particularly weakened political power of the employees. The situation went on until the government of Chatchai (1988-1991) which emphasised the importance of economy and labour. His policy of ‘changing battlefields to commercial fields’ enabled the implementation of any policies which would result in economic development and productivity (Schramm, 2001). These policies included the idea that more work welfare should be provided for all workers and, consequently, the SSA was enacted in 1990 and the voices of labour unions were allowed to increase.

Although most governments, before and after 1990, willingly adopted social insurance principles from the ILO and other countries which urged the participation of employees, it has barely happened in reality. Although five employee representatives are included as members of the tripartite board (Social Security Committee: SSC), originally, these representatives were selected by the SSO and needed to ‘follow order (*tum-taam-sung*), not to be picky (*mai-rueng-maak*) and take the same side [as the SSO] (*pen-phuak-diaw-gun*)’ if they wanted to be reappointed (Chanduoywit in Thairath, 2011). The election of SSC members was firstly

introduced in 2008 as a result of the amendment of Constitution in 2007. It was an attempt to empower the employees in all tripartite boards under responsibilities of the MoL (Labour Relations Bureau, website; Thailuan, 2010).

However, it is still noted that their roles are deficient (e.g. Buddhadilok, 2003; Thailuan, 2010). For example, as Atiwanichyapong (2007, p. 11) states, ‘labour [employee] representatives did not perform their roles fully. Labours [employees] considered this as the problem resulted from electoral process which did not accommodate the right person getting into the position. Some discussed how to change the electoral system. Perhaps representatives could be elected by all insured persons’. Therefore, it is likely that employees are not influential or even representative enough in the tripartite board.

### *3.3.2.2 Provincial-level*

Similar to national level, the three sectors – government, employer, employee – are used as a framework to explain provincial SIA. At the provincial level, SIA is defined on the basis of the SSRO’s responsibilities. This briefly includes: contribution collection, benefit eligibility determination and benefit payment. The focus of this research is not on the first aspect but on the benefit-related function of the SSRO which is termed as ‘social insurance benefit delivery (SIBD)’ throughout this dissertation. To understand the context of SIBD, one needs to understand Thai provincial administration which is a prefectural system where the governor is the chief of the province (see Section 3.1.2). In brief, it would rather be more accurate to say that British influence is mainly on national SIA. Meanwhile, SIA at the provincial level is undeniably involved provincial administration which influenced by Napoleonic norms.

A tripartite board of social insurance at the provincial level, the Provincial Social Security Subcommittee (PSSS), enables the direct participation of employers and employees in provincial SIA. While this will be discussed further in four provincial contexts in Chapter 5, this section illustrates the general picture of the PSSS. The composition of the PSSS is not proportionate among the three sectors; out of 11-15

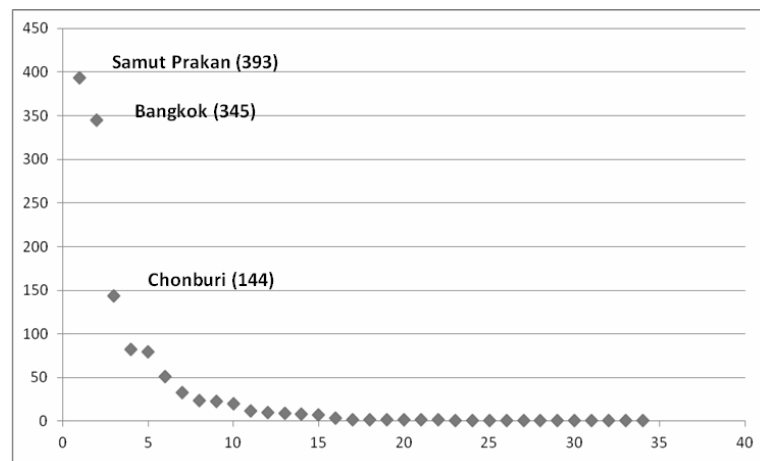
members, 2-6 of each employer and employee representatives depending on the size of the province will be appointed. This leads to the domination of the state in this subcommittee and, therefore, neither employers nor employees could fruitfully get their voices heard. Also, although these representatives are supposed to be elected (see Regulation of MoL on Tripartite Board Election 2008), how each representative actually gets into the position remains unclear.

For employers, the situation of representativeness and participation in the PSSS could be better or worse than the SSC at the national level. On the positive side, as the election of the representatives at the provincial level should be less complicated than at the national level, it is possible that representatives are elected by as many employers or employees as possible. However, as provincial politics has become more and more powerful, the PSSS appointment may be totally manipulated by employers who become politicians. As Connors (1999, p. 204) indicates, '[W]ith the rise of the provincial capitalists, a new dynamic had emerged in the political process.' Otherwise, the situation of employers at the provincial level is possibly not different from the national level. Notably, it is still unclear whether the representatives are actually elected or appointed. Also, it is unclear how the representatives perform their roles at the provincial level. It is likely that the performance of either employer or employee representatives in each province is similar to the tripartite board at the national level. These will be discussed further in the following chapters.

The situation for employees is similar to that of employers in terms of their representativeness and participation in the PSSS. The appointment process is unclear and the appointee might not represent employees in the province. However, in terms of political negotiation in the province, they are not as powerful as employers. The negotiation between employers and employees mostly occur in 34 out of 76 provinces where labour unions exist (see Figure 3.3). In the provinces with labour unions, employees tend to collaboratively negotiate with their employers on the issues of, for example, wages, work welfares or job security. For example, the Electronics Labour Union (Hoya Union) in Lamphun (Prachathai, 2012) and the

Triumph Labour Union in Samutprakan (Prachathai, 2008b) fought against the employers over the unjust redundancy. However, in the provinces without labour unions, no attempts of negotiation with either the government or employers were so far found. It should be noted that, in both cases, employees seldom work together in order to negotiate over or participate in provincial SIA. In other words, if employees experience difficulties in SIB-related issues, they mostly negotiate with the SSRO individually rather than collectively. Labour unions appear not to be the first resort of help when it comes to social insurance issues.

Figure 3.3 Number of labour unions by province



Source: Labour Relations Bureau, website, accessed on 24 September 2012

### 3.3.2.3 Politics of Thai social insurance administration

In general, the Thai social security system is described as a ‘paternalistic welfare state’ in which the ‘structure and features of the public spending programmes result, to a substantial degree, from the activities of the Thai bureaucracy’ (Schramm, 2001, p. 15). Thailand’s social insurance tripartite board not only reflects such character of welfare state. It also reflects characteristics of Hewison’s crony capitalism (2005) particularly weak governance, inadequate institutions, and patronage (see Buddhadilok, 2003; Thailuan, 2010; Chanduoywit in Thairath, 2011). At the national

level, the state, including both the government and the SSO, dominates SIA and sometimes misuses the SSF (see Section 3.2.2.2). Instead of facilitating SIA, the national government and the SSO have been consistently criticized on their intervention in the administration. At the provincial level, the SSRO is a central agency of SIBD and the governor who plays a similar role to the Prefect in France is not only responsible for provincial administration but also being part of the PSSS.

Employers generally have an ambiguous role. They are sometimes businessmen and at other time politicians. Before 1997, employer's roles were behind the stage but since 1997 employers have been more involved in politics. This involvement increased when the Thaksin government started in 2001. At the national level, they have two choices of participation in SIA. One is through the tripartite board; another is through their political connections. The former seems to be less influential than the latter. While the government still plays an important role in the SSC appointment, the representatives need to follow the government's decisions if they wish to be appointed again. Differently, with their direct (becoming MPs) or indirect (e.g. financially supporting the government) roles in Thai politics, some employees could exert power on social insurance somehow.

Employees are insufficiently strong to negotiate either in general or in the PSSS. Generally, employees in Thailand have been weak in labour relations and political negotiation (Hewison & Brown, 1994). Culturally, they were expected to be grateful to employers meaning that they should not confront their employers. In the 1970s, labour movements were growing as the country became industrialized but they still struggle in negotiations with either employers or the government. These negotiations are mostly focused on wage, work welfare and job security; while no attempts of collaborative action on the issue of SIA have been found. Politically, as Schramm (2001, p.15) suggests, 'the combination of power and welfare interests, and the traditional paternalistic attitude towards welfare recipients, led to the establishment of supply-oriented bureaucracies with little participation of social security financiers (employers and employees) and recipients'.

National and provincial politicians are less likely (or tend not to be?) involved in SIBD (see Section 3.2.1). Apparently, national politicians intervene in SIA now and then particularly when it comes to the SSO's revenue (e.g. BangkokBizNews, 2008) and expenditure (BangkokBizNews, 2005). However, with no news in the media and a limited amount of research, it is unclear if they play any part in SIBD. For provincial politicians, nothing related to their roles in SIA and SIBD appears in the media and the research database either. On the contrary, local politicians tend to be involved in SIBD regarding the Phrae and Nan SSROs' local cooperation projects. These assumptions are to be discussed further in this research. Roles and influence of politicians, at whatever level, will be clarified. Also, the extent to which Thaksin and his parties influence SIBD will be discussed in particular.

### **3.3.3 National-level administration**

Thai SIA can be explained at two levels: national and provincial. This section elaborates upon the national-level administration in three respects: policymakers, planning process, and budget process.

#### ***3.3.3.1 Policy-makers: Social Security Office (SSO) and tripartite board***

Policy makers of Thai SIA include two actors: a tripartite board and a central department. Firstly, out of the three national social security committees<sup>10</sup>, the Social Security Committee (SSC) is an advisory tri-partite board mainly responsible for policy and decision making regarding social insurance. Secondly, the Social Security Office is a central department under the control of the Ministry of Labour with three major roles. Its first role has been to be responsible for SIA since the beginning of the policy in 1990. In fact, not only from 1990 but also prior to that year, its predecessor was a department under control of the Ministry of Interior since 1957. The second role is also to be responsible for the Social Security Fund management

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<sup>10</sup> At the national level, three committees are in charge of the SSF administration including (Thanachaisethawut, 1999): Social Security Committee (SSC), Medical Committee (MC), and Appeal Committee (AC). The SSC is a tripartite advisory board. The MC comprises experts from various types of medical sciences being responsible for health-care related matters e.g. medical service provision, sickness benefit entitlement, or medical advice. The AC is a tripartite committee concerning legal issues i.e. the case in which either employees, employers, or other stakeholders are not satisfied with the prior results.

and, thus, there are different types of experts in the organisation e.g. actuarial specialists, financial experts. Lastly, the SSO's third role is a secretary of the SSC responsible for administrative tasks related to the SSC's decision making.

### 3.3.3.2 *Planning Process*

There are four types of plan in Thailand's SIA: five-year plan, annual plan, action plan, and project. Specifically, the SSO addresses the Social Security Five-year Strategy as a guideline of its administration in the five-year period (Social Security Office, 2009c, pp. 1-1). Seven technical terms are central concepts in the five-year strategy (Sawasdi-atikom & *et al*, 2010) including: vision, mission, value, strategic issue, strategy, output, and project. 'Vision' is an ultimate aim of the SSO defining what the SSO would like to become in the future. It is constituted by the Director-General. 'Mission' is an operation the SSO will carry out in order to achieve the designated vision. 'Value' is a guiding principle or an expected behaviour of organisation or individual. It guides the decision making of all individuals and will assist the organisation to achieve the vision and mission. 'Strategic issue' is an important issue the organisation must bear in mind. It needs to be operated to achieve the vision. To identify a strategic issue, the vision, external policies or factors, and expectations of stakeholders need to be reviewed. 'Strategy' is a means to achieve the vision under the SSO's limitation and capacity. 'Output' is the completed activities of service delivery. 'Project' is a performance process or a course of action which is systematically undertaken under particular objectives; the timeframe, budget, and a person in charge of the project must be specified at the beginning.

Until 2010, five five-year strategies, three Social Security Plans and two Social Security Strategic Plans, were declared in Thailand. The first Social Security Plan (1992-1996) was mainly to prepare for the system launch. The second Social Security Plan (1997-2001) was drafted in accordance with problems and obstructions that arose from the implementation of the first plan. The main points of this plan were to improve service efficiency and expand the coverage. The third plan (2002-2006) was still aimed to improve service efficiency and coverage but it additionally applied Result-Based Management in the administration. The fourth plan is the first

to be named a ‘Social Security Strategic Plan’ (2005-2009) which reflects the application of strategic management in the system. Similarly, the fourth and the fifth plan (Social Security Strategic Plan 2010-2014) are both concerned with efficiency, coverage expansion, and organisational contexts.

Briefly, the planning process of SIA in Thailand has recently concerned the participatory principle. To draft the strategy, at least four policies are considered including: the 1990 SSA, the National Economic and Social Development Plan, the government's policy, and the Labour and Social Welfare Development Plan. Also, the problems and comments that occurred during the implementation of the previous social security strategy gathered from stakeholders are also considered. Out of five five-year plans, the first three plans were drafted by the government only. However, since the late 1990s when the NPM has been of major concern, strategic management has been applied in Thai administration and the SSO was inevitably obliged to follow such a pattern. Consequently, the recent two five-year social security strategies have involved all stakeholders in order to draft the so-called participatory strategy.

### *3.3.3.3 Budget Allocation and Spending*

The accounting system of Social Security Fund (SSF) is supposed to be decentralised (Division of Finance and Accounting, 1997, p. 1). In principle, the SSO and SSROs separately run their own audit and accounting system (see Appendix 2). Each unit must present its revenue, expenditure, and the allotted budget to the public. The SSO is particularly responsible for gathering all SSROs’ accounts and submitting these to the Office of the Auditor General. Nonetheless, it should be noted that the ‘decentralised’ budget system is restricted to the audit and accounting only, it does not mean decentralised decision-making of budget allocation. Two sources of the Social Security Office’s budget are of interest in this research: the annual budget and the extra-annual budget. These two types are the budget for social security administration both at the national and regional level (Hanbenjapong, 1999). An annual budget must conform to the Bureau of Budget legislation. An extra-annual budget (10% of annual contribution being collected), or the so-called administrative budget, could be spent on operational administrative costs e.g. temporary



employment, over-time per diem for officials and employees, business trip costs, etc., as approved by the Board. This budget makes SIA more flexible as, for example, the SSO could allot this budget to the SSRO for their initiative project.

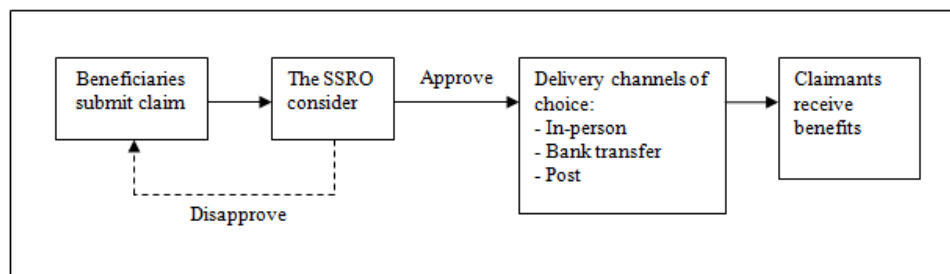
### 3.3.4 Provincial-level administration

SIA at the provincial level can be explained in three respects: social insurance benefit delivery (SIBD) pattern, the collaborative committee (PSSS), and a provincial delivery agency.

#### 3.3.4.1 Pattern of social insurance benefit delivery

Generally, the pattern of provincial SIBD is designed by the SSO. This pattern is an official process which is usually operated nationwide. Figure 3.4 shows a simplified diagram of SIBD at the provincial level. Starting from the claim made by beneficiaries, documents such as proof of identity, house registration, medical fee receipt, and so on are required together with the claim. Different benefits require a slightly different set of documents but the claiming processes are the same. Then, the SSRO considers whether the claimant is entitled to with the benefit and whether the supplied documents are valid and sufficient. If not, the claim will be returned to the claimant. Otherwise, the claimant will receive the benefit through the delivery channel of their choice which is either in-person, bank transfer, or by post. Notably, this pattern is considered as the uniform pattern of SIBD which will be referred to throughout this dissertation.

Figure 3.4 Standardized pattern of SIBD at the provincial level



### 3.3.4.2 Collaborative committee: Provincial Social Security Subcommittee (PSSS)

At the provincial level (excluding Bangkok), similar to the national board, the Provincial Social Security Subcommittee (PSSS) is appointed to advise the service and benefit delivery in the province or, precisely, to be an advisory tripartite board at the provincial level. Their responsibilities are to: consider problems and suggest solutions of service and benefit delivery, give advice on the development of the employer's contribution payment system, make suggestion the SSRO regarding the prosecution of the employer who break the laws, consider each special case of disability which does not comply with the general regulation, and other operation according to the assignments from the SSO (see SSC's Order No.02/2550).

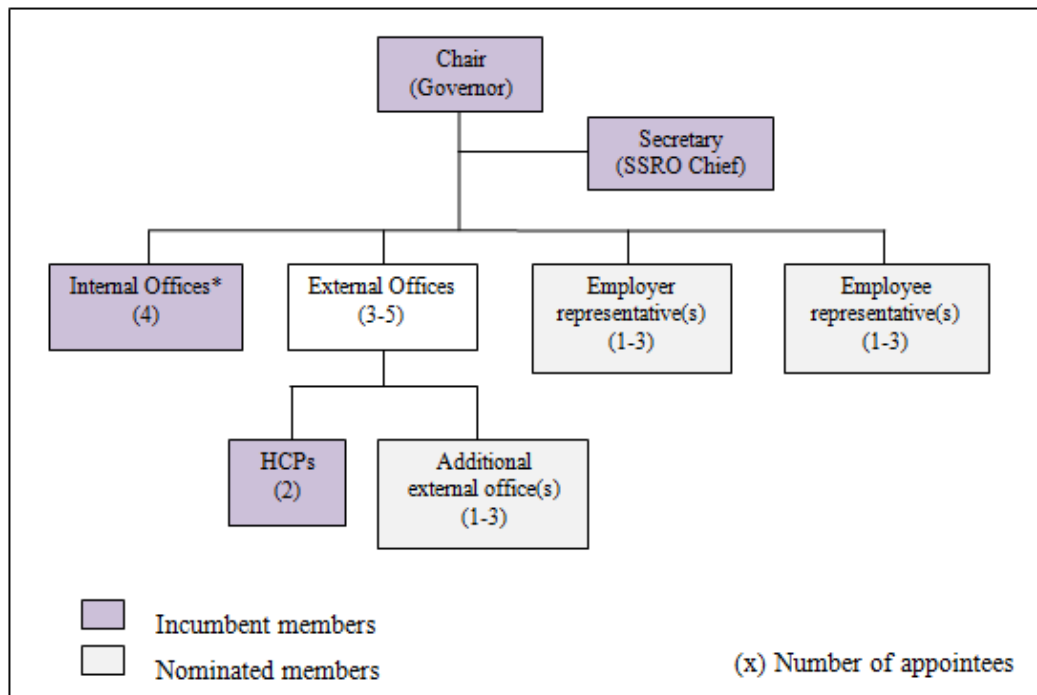
The PSSS is considered to be a fundamental group of social insurance actors in each province. Basically, 11-17 actors are involved in SIBD at the provincial level (see Table 3.2). In the provinces where up to 200,000 insured persons are registered, 11 members of the PSSS will be appointed. In the provinces where 200,001-500,000 insured persons are registered, there will be 14 members. Lastly, if more than 500,000 insured persons are registered, 17 members of the PSSS will be appointed.

Table 3.2 Variation of the number of the PSSS across provinces

Number of insured persons	≤200k	>200k – 500k	>500k
Internal offices	4	4	4
Health care providers	2	2	2
Additional external office(s)	1	2	3
Employer representative	1	2	3
Employee representative	1	2	3
Total (including the governor and the SSRO)	11	14	17

Source: SSC's Order No.02/2550 Concerning the Appointment of Provincial Social Security Subcommittee

Figure 3.5 Structure of the PSSS



\* including Labour Office, Employment Office, Labour Welfare and Protection Office, and Labour Development Center

\*\* e.g. Attorney Office (Phrae), Local Administration Office (Nan), Private Hospital (Lamphun), Public Hospitals (Chiang Mai)

Source: SSC's Order No.02/2550 Concerning the Appointment of Provincial Social Security Subcommittee

There are two types of PSSS members: incumbent and non-incumbent (see Figure 3.5). The first group of members being appointed regarding their posts (incumbent members) includes: the Governor as chairman, the Chief of the SSRO as secretary, four chiefs of regional offices under control of the Ministry of Labour (internal offices), and two Health Care Providers (HCPs: Public Health Office, Provincial Hospital). The second group being appointed regarding the nomination (non-incumbent members) includes: additional external office(s), employee representative, and employer representative. Notably, in Figure 3.5, the HCPs and additional external office(s) are considered together as external offices (provincial offices not under control of the MoL). However, in later chapters, the term 'external office' will only refer to the (appointed) additional external office.

The non-incumbent PSSS members are nominated by: the SSRO, the national employee organisation, the national employer organisation, a national politician, and a senior bureaucrat. This can be analysed in two groups of non-incumbent members: additional external offices and representatives of employers and employees. Firstly, the selection of additional external offices lies mostly at the SSRO's discretion. Secondly, the selection criterion of employer and employee representatives varies across provinces. Employer and employee representatives must be selected from the legalized employer and employee organisations in the province. However, presumably, the employers are actually selected due to their political or economical power in the province. Also, the employees are possibly selected politically. Some employees are nominated either by the national employee organisation or through their personal connection in the province. These selections of employer and employee will be discussed further with fieldwork data in Chapter 5.

#### *3.3.4.3 Delivery agency: Social Security Regional Office (SSRO)*

The SSRO was first established not long after the SSO's establishment. It was specified in the SSA that the SSRO must be set up and the subsequent laws and regulations designated the SSRO's responsibilities and authorities. For example, according to the Regulation of the Ministry of Labour, the SSRO is responsible for practice and cooperation with other organisations in compliance with the SSO's policies, plans, and projects. In brief, the SSRO is a central agency of SIBD with seven major functions: registration, contribution collection, information update, social insurance benefit payment, Workmen's Compensation benefit payment, public relations, and suggestion service (Chaiwong *et al*, 2006, p. 148).

The SSRO's organisation slightly varies across provinces. Originally, its organisational structure could be classified into five divisions regarding its functions: (1) registry, (2) benefit claim and verification, (3) contribution collection, (4) finance and accounting, and (5) general administration. Then, in the fourth social security plan, its organisational structure was supposed to be separated into two parts: front office and back office. The divisions (1)-(3) were considered as the front office literally interacting with the clients; whereas (4)-(5) were the back office mainly

responsible for supporting the activities of the front office. However, recently, it has been structured slightly different across provinces. For example, while the Phrae SSROs set up their organisational into front office and back office; the Chiang Mai SSRO structured their office into three parts: front office, back office, and legal office.

### **3.4 The impact of decentralised administration since the late 1990s**

In the late 1990s, two policies in relation to decentralisation (constitutional change, good governance) were enacted resulting in the change of SI administrative system (see Section 3.2.2.3). Firstly, the Constitution of 1997 emphasised decentralisation and New Public Management (NPM) approaches. It appeared to support accountability, transparency, open government and emphasising a less important central government (Bowornwathana, 2008). Secondly, the Decree of Good Governance was enacted in 2003 specifying that executive agencies must have enough jurisdictions in performing their duties and should cooperate with other agencies in providing the service whenever appropriate (Dhamrongrachanupap Institute, 2009). Additionally, after the enactment of the 1997 constitution, a number of studies were also carried out to provide data for the government's further plans on regionalization and decentralisation (e.g. Dhamrongrachanupap Institute, 1999, 2000; Provincial Administration Development and Promotion Bureau, 2004). Thus, subsequent policies and regulations were indeed constituted changing the administration at regional and local level. However, the 1997 constitutional change and the 2003 decree are considered to be the most influential policies affecting the change in SIA.

These two policies had four main impacts on SIA at the provincial level. For instance, the SSRO has become more responsive; the SSO more facilitative; local governments more independent; and, the Governor more powerful. As a result of the Decree in 2003, the new direction of bureaucratic reform promoted and influenced regionalization (OPDC, 2003b). The first two impacts of decentralisation – more

responsive SSRO, more facilitative SSO – on the SI administrative system are thus results of the regionalization. Although Thailand's bureaucratic system has been reformed over time (see Suwanmongkol, 1994), the reform policy being operated after the 1990s has based on the concept of 'smaller central; more responsive regional and more decentralised local [governments] (OPDC, 2004)'. At the regional level, a strategic planning approach has been introduced to regional administration (see the Regulation of Prime Minister's Office on Integrative Provincial Administration 2003). The organisational context (SWOT) analysis has become a crucial first step of the planning process. The SSRO, therefore, needs to be more concerned with its local contexts (more responsive) while the SSO needs to steer rather than row (more facilitative).

The third impact was also resulted from the Decree of Good Governance 2003 which gave more power to the Governor (Wirachnipawan, 2004). It was specified that there must be a head of the province looking after all provincial offices. Applying the business concept of Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in the regional public administration, the Governor was authorised as a CEO, the highest position, of the province and therefore became more powerful than before. Theoretically, regarding the IPA policy, s/he could be involved in SIA in two respects: personnel and budget. Subject to his/her discretion, the Governor not only could relocate the SSRO officials but also could provide an extra budget for project operation of any regional offices in the province.

Yet, as the IPA policy being implemented, it was argued that it had no impact on the provincial administration. According to Damrongrachanupap Institute (2003), the IPA policy is insignificant to provincial administration because of its implementation failure citing insufficient devolved authority and funds as the reasons of failure. I would argue, however, that the IPA strengthened the hierarchical relations between the governor and other provincial offices. It enabled the governor to intervene in provincial administration of social insurance. Also, Thepthong's study (2004) finds that the CEO governor plays a role in provincial policy making and implementation and that his/her enthusiasm help to obtain good cooperation from government

agencies, resulting in better service delivery to the recipients. Therefore, apparently, the governor was empowered by this policy.

Lastly, the Decentralisation Process and Plan 1999 was inaugurated as a practical guideline for decentralising authorities to local governments. It set a framework for the central government to follow in order to enable local governments' autonomy. Notably, as local governments become more independent, their involvement in SIA depends upon their leader's decisions. Further, since local governments are basically obliged to social assistance benefit delivery, they play no role in SIA unless the SSRO requests their involvement.

## **Conclusion**

Reviewing both the international and national contexts of social insurance in Thailand not only portrays the system but also depicts policy actors in SIBD. In line with international norms, the actors involved in social insurance can be categorised into: the state, employee, and employer. All of them are indeed the basic actors in Thailand's social insurance system. Further, there are six actors involved in Thailand's SIBD: the SSRO, the (national) SSO, the provincial administrative unit (PAU), local governments, employees, and employers. However, the Thai politico-administrative context brings two more actors into SIBD system: the provincial governor and local government. As a result, the state is divided into three levels of governments where each level plays different roles in SIA. First, the central department, namely the SSO, is a direct controller of the SSRO. Second, the provincial governor is an indirect controller who is authorised to take overall control of the province. Third, local governments are a potential actor which voluntarily involved in SIBD. In brief, the SSRO is the central agency of SIBD at the provincial level in Thailand surrounded by its central department (the SSO), provincial governor, local governments, employers, and employees.

In addition to the principles of ILO, there are three countries – Germany, UK, France – influencing Thailand's SIA on the ground. Thailand under modernization has shaped its social insurance system using lessons learned from Germany and UK.

However, lessons from France cannot be overlooked as France shaped Thai regional administration, which in turn affected SIA at the provincial level. However, it should be noted that generalizing social insurance benefit delivery across countries is ‘the least possible task and sometimes could be misleading (Bochel, 2005, p. 52)’. Bearing this in mind, the following explanation may be oversimplified but at least provides some understanding of the Thai system.

Being centralised, social insurance in Thailand has been administered at two levels: national and regional. At the national level, the SSC, a tri-partite board, makes overall decisions on how to manage the SSF. The SSO receives policies from the board and sets out policy frameworks for its regional offices. The SSRO is a central agent of SIBD at the provincial level in Thailand and a delivery agency of the SSO in benefit delivery. Its main responsibilities are to operate the contribution collection and to provide social insurance benefits and services for the insured persons in each province. Since the beginning, the SSRO have been implementing the policy uniformly in order to standardised the service and benefit delivery.

During the early 1990s, the SSRO, when delivering SIB, strictly followed the relevant national regulations and laws. The regulations could only be changed by the SSC and, although employers and employees had positions in the SSC, the government representatives usually dominated the decision-making at the national-level. By the same token, since the SSC took over all decision-making, the SSRO had no authority to adapt any regulations to respond to socio-economic factors in its area. However, after the late 1990s, the SSROs have initiated projects in response to local contexts e.g. local people’s opinions or local policy actor’s requests.

Two policies (the 1997 Constitution and the 2003 Decree of Good Governance) generated four impacts on three administrative spheres – SIA, provincial administration (ProA), local administration (LoA) – related to SIBD. Firstly, in SIA, the SSROs have become more responsive and the SSO become more facilitative. Secondly, in ProA, provincial governors have become more powerful. Thirdly, in LoA, local governments have become more autonomous.





## **Chapter 4 : Research Design and Practices**

This research is case-study research aiming to investigate a single phenomenon, namely, ‘diversification of social insurance benefit delivery (SIBD) in Thailand’. It is an intensive study of diversified service patterns of social insurance at the provincial level ‘for the purpose of understanding a larger class of (similar) units (Gerring, 2004, p. 342)’ and ‘concerned with the complexity and particular nature of the case in question (Bryman, 2008, p. 52)’. Selecting four provinces (Chiang Mai, Lamphun, Phrae, Nan), this research is a multi-site case study in which ‘the aim is to draw comparisons between cases (Bryman & Burgess, 1994, p. 223)’. As ‘similar units’ are restricted to Thai provinces only, this research admittedly falls on one of case-study common concerns on limited generalizability (Platt, 2007; Rihoux & Grimm, 2006; Yin, 1994). However, as Yin (1994, p.10) suggest, ‘case studies, like experiments, are generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes. ... [It] does not represent a "sample," and the investigator's goal is to expand and generalize theories (analytic generalization) and not to enumerate frequencies (statistical generalization)’.

This chapter is outlined into three sections: sampling and selection, data collection, and data analysis. Section 4.1 discusses sampling techniques and the case selection of this research; how and why each province and respondent is selected. Section 4.2 discusses three data collection methods (documents, interview, observation), fieldwork plan and practice, ethical issues and limitations. Then, Section 4.3 discusses data analysis methods: content analysis and situational analysis.

### **4.1 Sampling and Selection**

This section discusses the sampling method and selection criteria. Sources of data for this research are ‘natural social setting’ and ‘social artefacts’ which can be analysed at three levels: micro-social, meso-social and macro-social (Blaikie, 2009, p. 163). A single-stage non-probability sampling method, specifically purposive sampling, was employed to select samples for data collection at each level. At the macro-level, the

government offices, universities, and research institutions were specified for collecting tertiary data in order to get a whole picture of the system. At the meso-level, regions and provinces in Thailand are the unit of consideration. Firstly, out of five regions (Bangkok and metropolitan areas (BMAs), Central, South, North, Northeast), the North is selected regarding its distinctive socio-economic characteristics and outstanding political contexts (see Section 3.2.1 and further discussion in Section 4.1.1). Regional variation is elaborated to highlight distinctive characteristics of the North, the region in which four selected provinces located. Secondly, out of 75 provinces, Chiang Mai, Lamphun, Phrae, and Nan are selected on the basis of three criteria: economic differences, practicality and political contexts (see Section 4.1.2). Then, at the micro-level, 58 prospective interviewees were listed in accordance with the analytical framework and the data collected from the first phase of fieldwork (see Section 4.1.3).

#### **4.1.1 Regional political variation and the North of Thailand**

As discussed earlier, in terms of politics, regional variation in Thailand can be explained in five regions (see Section 3.2.1). Particularly in the context of Thai contemporary politics, the North is an interesting region. Among five major regions, the North is crucially important in Thailand's political game as well as the Northeast. What makes the North politically more interesting than the Northeast, however, is the fact that it is the region with a strong and direct connection with Thaksin whose sister was in power until the latest military coup in 2014. Despite consistently high popularity in the North and the Northeast, other three regions i.e. the Central, Bangkok and the South have not always been in favour of Thaksin's parties. It is thus fair to conclude that the North is the strategic region of Thai politics and Thaksin's electoral heartland.

Selecting the North, this research could exhibit how political contexts affect SIBD in the region. Perhaps members of Thaksin's parties would play a role as mediator between the SSRO and insured persons. They may see an opportunity that the accessibility of SIBs is too low and offer their offices as another channel of SIBD. Or, they might connect with the SSRO chief to provide a 'special' service channel

particularly and exclusively in their constituencies. It is also possible however that they are barely influential in provincial SIBD since, as discussed in Chapter 3, provincial politics in Thailand is a complex entity of money and power game in which social security is perceived as negligible.

Further, it is argued that politics in the North is not simply a patronage system. Neher and Bunjaipet (1989) study sociopolitical behavior in three villages of Northern Thailand and conclude that '[c]lientelism is one way villagers attempt to maximize their interests. However, patron-client relations are no longer (if they ever were) the explanatory variable for understanding Thai society (p.66).' With long years in the field, Bowie's works discusses the North in various aspects such as its subsistence economy (1992), social class and Buddhism (1998), and vote-buying in a village (2008). In brief, she finds that the North has complex patterns of economic exchange and Buddhist merit-making which could reflect socio-economic classes in the region. Also, 'far from being politically immature or uneducated, villagers [in the North] are involved and informed participants in electoral politics (Bowie, 2008, p. 504)'. In other words, with pressures from the top (central government) or the oppressing (political leaders at all levels), the bottom (the Northern villagers) is not necessarily oppressed to cohere with power and orders. Possibly, this will reflect in the field of SIBD where, in principle, the oppressed could resist their patrons.

In other aspects, Van Roy (1971) studies organizational patterns and developmental processes of economic systems in the North of Thailand and states that the North is an important region of Thailand. To understand this, similar to political aspect, regional variation is firstly explained in five regions: one metropolitan area (Bangkok and vicinity) and four major regions (Central, Northeast, North and South). Bangkok and vicinity are usually considered together due to socio-economic characteristics – high economic productivity, relatively urbanized society – they have in common. The other four regions are geographically clustered while Bangkok is the centre of the country. Generally, Thailand has a huge socio-economic gap between its centre and regions (Central, Northeast, North, South) regarding four indicators: GRP, GRP per capita, monthly income, and population density (see Table 4.1). Firstly, Bangkok

and vicinity has the highest Gross Regional Products (GRP) in Thailand which is much higher than the Northeast (4.6 times higher), the South (5.1 times), the North (5.7 times) and the Central (7.1 times) respectively. This exhibits how the Thai economic development is concentrated in Bangkok and vicinity.

Table 4.1 Regional variation in Thailand (2009)

Region	WHOLE KINGDOM	BKK & Vicinity	Central	Northeast	North	South
GDP (million baht) <sup>1</sup>	9,590,722	-	-	-	-	-
GRP (million baht) <sup>1</sup>	-	4,337,991.60	607,167.26	939,012.70	756,710.17	865,008.33
GDP per capita (baht) <sup>1</sup>	143,352.64	-	-	-	-	-
GRP per capita (baht) <sup>1</sup>	-	377,182.71 (£7,544)	200,291.96 (£4,006)	41,237.32 (£825)	62,372.17 (£1,247)	93,400.31 (£1,868)
Average monthly income per household <sup>2</sup>	20,903 (£418)	37,732 (£755)	20,952 (£419)	15,358 (£307)	15,727 (£315)	22,926 (£459)
Population density (per km <sup>2</sup> ) <sup>3</sup>	123.7	1,318.9	179.5	127.0	69.4	124.7

<sup>1</sup> National Economic and Social Development Bureau website, accessed on 24 October 2013

<sup>2</sup> National Statistics Office website, accessed on 24 October 2013

<sup>3</sup> Department of Provincial Administration website, accessed on 24 October 2013

Secondly, considering the GRP per capita, Bangkok and vicinity still has the highest number, the Central comes as the second (53.10% of Bangkok and vicinity) following by the South (24.76%), the North (16.53%) and the Northeast (10.94%). This suggests the large economic gap between the central part of Thailand (Bangkok, vicinity and the Central) and the three regions (Northeast, North and South). Thirdly, Bangkok and vicinity area is the most populous area in the country. Regarding average income, each household in Bangkok and vicinity approximately earns 37,732 baht (£755) per month. The South comes in the second place and the Central the third. The two poorest regions in Thailand are the North and the Northeast. Fourthly, being the most populous area in the country, population density in Bangkok and vicinity is much higher than the other regions. On the opposite end, the North is much less populous than the Central, the Northeast and the South respectively.

Considering socio-economic indicators above, the North is an interesting region with the lowest population density and being one of two poorest regions in Thailand (the other is the Northeast). It is thus interesting to know how social insurance benefits are delivered in such circumstances. Possibly, service users are living sparsely across the region and some may find the journey to service points e.g. the SSRO's office difficult. Things may be worse if the journey costs almost half of their daily wages and a whole day of their work. Under the current NPM-based Thai social insurance administration, the SSRO is expected to respond to this situation and provide customer-oriented services. Hence, this research is expected to exhibit how the service has been customized in response to local contexts.

In relation to social insurance, the North was also interesting regarding four indices (see Table 4.2). Firstly, the North is the region with the smallest number of insured persons (606,364) but the number of utilizations in this region (2,786,493) is larger than those of the Northeast (2,635,805) and the South (1,933,732). Secondly, in relation to the first, the North has the largest number of utilizations per insured person (4.60 service receipts per insured persons) in Thailand. This is higher than the average of the country (3.55). Compared to other regions, it comes on the top following by the Northeast (3.79), the Central (3.64), Bangkok and vicinity (3.39), and the South (3.17) respectively. Thus, the question is how SIBD works in this region where insured persons could access the service more often than other regions. While insured persons in the North seemingly dispersed around the region and many may find service access inconvenient, the figures contrarily show that benefits are claimed more than several regions. Is this because the SSRO designs SIBD to be more accessible?

Table 4.2 Social insurance and regional variation in Thailand (2009)

Region	WHOLE KINGDOM	BKK & Vicinity	Central	Northeast	North	South
Number of insured persons <sup>1</sup>	8,680,359	4,787,053	1,980,908	695,397	606,364	610,637
Utilization of SIBs <sup>2</sup>	30,786,756	16,213,277	7,216,449	2,635,805	2,786,493	1,933,732
Utilization per person <sup>3</sup>	3.55	3.39	3.64	3.79	4.60	3.17
Percentage of insured persons in each size of enterprises <sup>4</sup>						
%S	32.10	30.83	23.12	42.23	48.40	43.39
%M	21.62	21.10	21.59	21.80	21.10	26.10
%L	27.17	27.35	31.65	22.51	20.98	22.77
%XL	19.11	20.72	23.64	13.46	9.52	7.74

<sup>1</sup> Insured persons under Article 33 of Social Security Act, Social Security Office's annual statistic report (2009)

<sup>2</sup> Utilization by insured persons under Article 33, from Social Security Office's annual statistic report (2009)

<sup>3</sup> Utilization per person is estimated by the number of utilization divided by the number of insured persons

<sup>4</sup> Percentage of enterprises in the region (by size) is calculated from the number of enterprises into percentage by the author

Thirdly, considering the percentage of insured persons in S-sized enterprises in each region, the North has the largest number (48.40%) in the country following by the South (43.39%), the Northeast (42.23%), Bangkok and vicinity (30.83%) and the Central (23.12%). Two questions could be addressed regarding this figure. Firstly, small-sized enterprises include shops and family industries which sometimes located in remote area. It is thus interesting to see how the SSRO manages to deliver SIBs to those who work in small-sized enterprises which scattered around the province. Secondly, it is generally assumed that the bigger the enterprise is the better work welfare is possibly provided by employers. Is the reason why the SIB utilization in the North is the highest in the country because social insurance is the best choice for many employees in small-sized enterprises?

In conclusion, three dimensions – social, economic, political – of regional variation are considered in this section. This research selected the North as a region of study not only because it is the least populous and the second poorest region in the country. It also entails interesting political character. It bears the label 'Thaksin's electoral heartland' resulting in political constraints in which politicians try to retain their

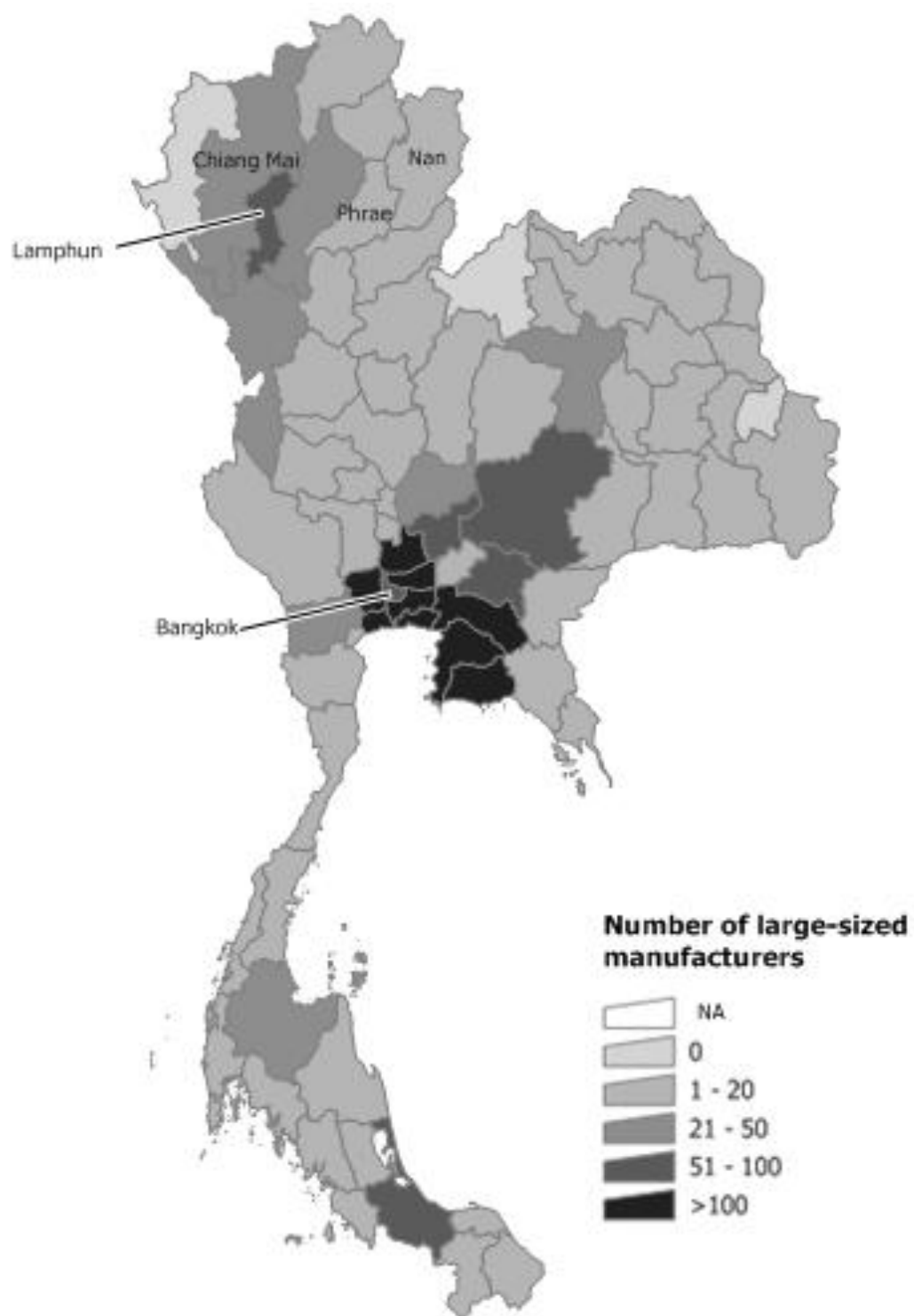
votes. Moreover, in terms of social insurance, the North is the region with the smallest number of insured persons, the largest number of SIB utilization per insured person and most enterprises are small-sized. Thus, it is an interesting case of study which could provide the understanding of how SIBs are successfully – compared to other regions – delivered in the contexts of poor and less-populous society with high political pressures.

#### **4.1.2 Selection of Provinces**

The total population of province selection is 75 provinces. Although there are 76 provinces in Thailand, Bangkok was excluded because it had a particular social insurance administrative system different from the other provinces. As a capital city, Bangkok has 12 branches to serve three millions insured persons in the province. In contrast, each province normally has only the SSRO or the SSRO with its branch depending on the number of insured persons. Basically, four out of 75 provinces (Chiang Mai, Lamphun, Phrae, Nan; see Figure 4.1) were purposively selected regarding three criteria: economic differences, data accessibility and political nature of the province. Since social insurance inevitably involves different types of employers and employees within the labour market, the first criterion is provincial employment structure. In Thailand, the economic structure comprises three major sectors: industrial, service (or commercial), and agricultural. Thus, with its employment structure, the selected cases should represent a different major economic sector in order to control for socio-economic variation on social insurance administration in the province.



Figure 4.1 Number of large-sized manufacturers in each province, 2007



Source: National Statistics Office, website, accessed on 21 February 2012

Second, the data should be accessible in the limited time and resources available. Re-emphasizing the North distinctiveness, this region has a province with a high number of large-sized manufacturers (Lamphun) surrounded by several provinces with lower numbers of large manufacturers (see Figure 4.1). Thus, out of four main regions in Thailand, it was selected because it was an area where three possible samples were located nearby one another. This results in saving time and the cost of transportation. By the same token, since the researcher had been living and working in this area for a period of time, it was expected that the researcher could either gain access to data and the contact of key informants or travel around the area with ease. Third, as discussed earlier, the North is an interesting region since it is one of the poorest regions with substantial political interventions of the government. Regardless of different political nature, all provinces share one thing in common. Based on Thailand's recent general election results, most of locals support Thaksin.

The sites of study were originally restricted to three provinces in the North - Chiang Mai (commercial), Lamphun (industrial), and Phrae (agricultural) – as they are three different areas located nearby one another. However, after the first fieldwork phase, Nan, an agricultural province next to Phrae, was added due to its participation in a distinctive co-operation project. Nan was not selected at the beginning due to the limited accessibility of data. As the researcher prepared for the fieldwork in the UK, most data for province selection was accessed through an online database. However, in the first fieldwork phase, the Nan SSRO's distinctive project (Thinking Partners and Friends of Insured Persons: P&F) was mentioned by the Phrae SSRO so the researcher further investigated and found that Nan was one of the outstanding cases which should not be missed.

#### 4.1.2.1 Province profile

The four selected provinces are different from one another in many respects. Four relevant indices – per capita income, geographical congestion of insured persons, number of service accesses, satisfaction of service users – are exhibited to highlight the differences (see Table 4.4). In this section, the profiles of Chiang Mai, Lamphun, Phrae and Nan are presented respectively.

Table 4.3 Characteristics of selected provinces

	Chiang Mai	Lamphun	Phrae	Nan
Size (sq.m.) <sup>1</sup>	20,107.06	4,505.88	11,472.07	6538.60
Annual per capita income (Baht) <sup>2</sup>	78,532 (£1570.64)	156,772 (£3135.44)	46,589 (£931.78)	44,769 (£895.38)
Number of insured persons <sup>3</sup>	174,380	77,196	16,092	10,715
Concentration of insured persons in city centre (%) <sup>4</sup>	59.52%	91.99%	67.11%	54.61%
Number of social insurance service accesses <sup>5</sup>	2	2	31	100
Satisfaction of service recipients <sup>6</sup>	70.73	67.80	71.13	78.86

Sources:

<sup>1</sup>Department of Provincial Administration (2010)

<sup>2</sup>National Economic and Social Development Bureau (2010)

<sup>3</sup>Social Security Office (2009b)

<sup>4</sup>Social Security Office (2010)

<sup>5</sup>Chiang Mai has one central office and one branch office; Lamphun has one central office and additional access (GCS) in the shopping mall; Phrae has one office and 30 additional accesses in cooperating SAOs; Nan has one office and 99 additional accesses in cooperating SAOs

<sup>6</sup>Thammasat University Research and Consultancy Institute (2007, p. 122)

Chiang Mai, the largest province in the North, is a commercial area with 174,380 insured persons in 25 districts (see Figure 4.2). Interestingly, almost 60% of insured persons are concentrated in the city centre or *Muang* District (see Table 4.4). Also, being the second lowest satisfied province, SIBD service in Chiang Mai is mostly provided at the SSRO's office in the city centre with additional service in the remote district of Fang (see Table 4.3). In this research, this province represents as expected a case of a rigid form of SIBD. Possibly, this rigidity is a result of political tensions in Chiang Mai. This province is politically significant to the current government (see

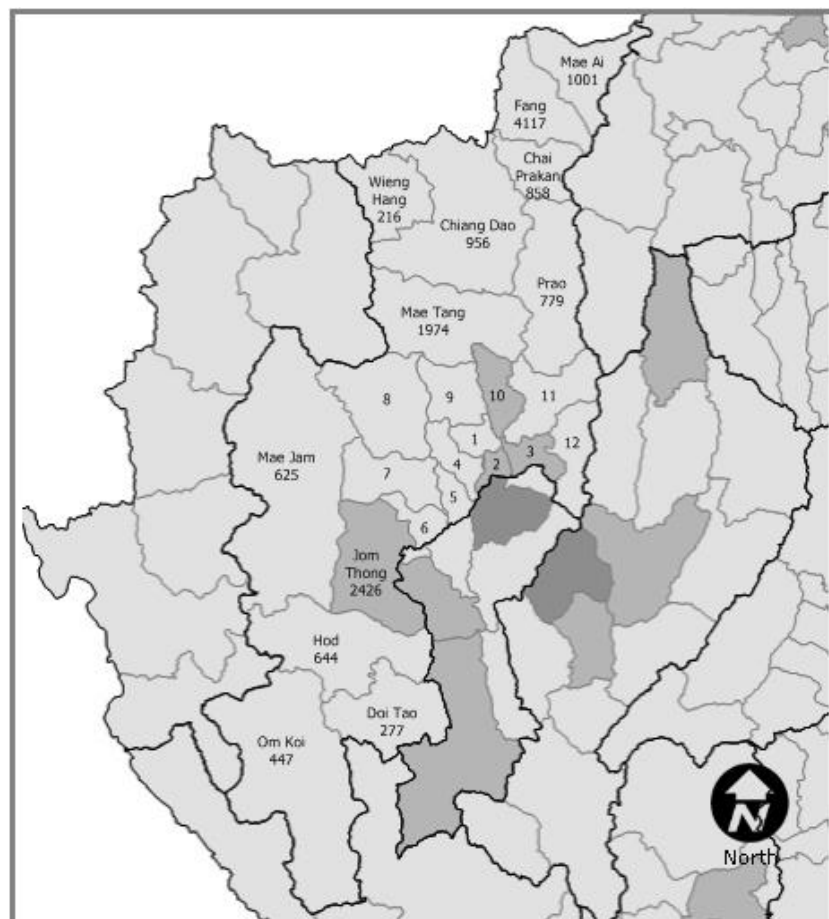
Section 3.2.1). Having close ties with Thaksin's, many elite and wealthy families in the province tend to have political power and influence over provincial policy-making.

Table 4.4 Number of insured persons in District No.1-12 in Chiang Mai

No.	District	Number of Insured persons	No.	District	Number of Insured persons
1	Muang	106004	7	Maewang	415
2	Saraphee	9918	8	Samerng	364
3	Sankhumpang	9260	9	Mae-rim	7939
4	Hang Dong	7427	10	Sansai	13576
5	Sanpatong	3731	11	Doisaket	3821
6	Doi-loh	686	12	Mae-on	621

Source: SSO (2011)

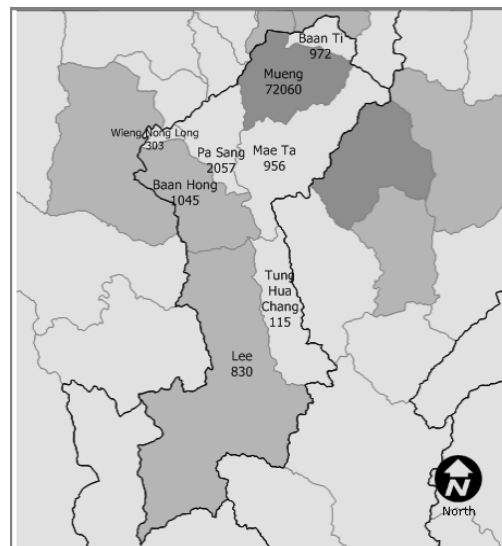
Figure 4.2 Number of insured persons in Chiang Mai, by district



Source: - Map from National Statistics Office, website, accessed on 21 February 2012  
 - Number of insured persons from SSO (2011)

Lamphun is an industrial area and the smallest province among four selected provinces. Due to its location and economic contexts, it is sometimes considered as another district of Chiang Mai (Sarnpruek, 2010, p. 85). Many big businesses in Lamphun, except those in the industrial park, have links with Chiang Mai. With 77,196 insured persons in the province (see Figure 4.3), more than 90% of them work in *Muang* District where an industrial park is located; while the rest are dispersed in seven other districts. Per capita income in Lamphun is the highest among four provinces since a number of multi-national companies providing a high salary are situated in the industrial park. This also makes Lamphun an interesting province where not only local businessmen but also international businesses must be of major concern to the government. In addition to its central office, the Lamphun SSRO operated the Government Counter Service (GCS) project to provide an extra service in the shopping mall nearby the industrial park. Hypothetically, this is for the purpose of serving local needs (workers who work until late in the evening). Still, it should be noted that, compared to other selected provinces, Lamphun gained the least satisfaction from its service users (see Table 4.3).

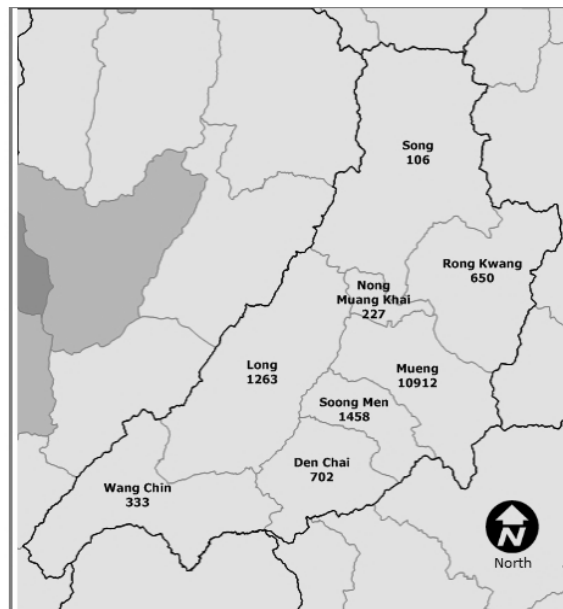
Figure 4.3 Number of insured persons in Lamphun, by district



Source: - Map from National Statistics Office, website, accessed on 21 February 2012  
 - Number of insured persons from SSO (2011)

Compared to the four selected, Phrae is the second largest province with the second least per capita income (see Table 4.3). It is an agricultural area with 16,092 insured persons scattered around the province (see Figure 4.4). Mostly, provincial elites in Phrae are those with noble or wealthy background (Bumbud, 2012). Many of them directly joined in provincial and national politics; some became MPs and some became members of the Phrae PAOs council. Before 2010, the social insurance service had been provided only in the SSRO office located in the city centre (*Muang District*). Then, in 2010, the SSRO cooperated with 30 local organisations in providing additional service access for insured persons. As a result, thirty service accesses were added across the province under the Cooperation with Local Organisations (CLO) project. According to the project proposal, the SSRO designed the CLO project in an attempt to provide easy-to-access service in response to local needs in Phrae. Since service recipients found the travel to the SSRO office troublesome and time-consuming, the SSRO officials noticed such difficulties and decided to initiate the CLO project. In general, the Phrae SSRO's service users were highly satisfied with their services.

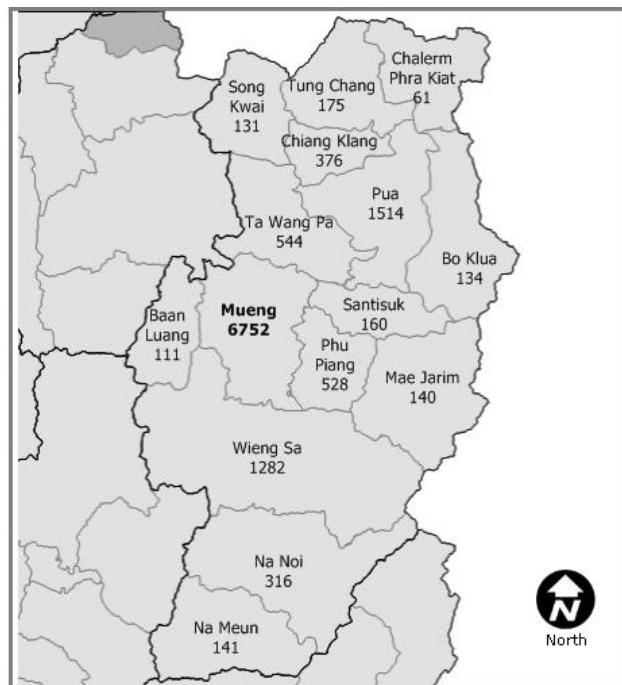
Figure 4.4 Number of insured persons in Phrae, by district



Source: - Map from National Statistics Office, website, accessed on 21 February 2012  
 - Number of insured persons from SSO (2011)

Nan is the poorest and second smallest province of the four. Instead of being economically outstanding, the province is known of their strong community-level political participation (Khampeng, 2009). It is an agricultural area with 10,715 insured persons (see Figure 4.5). Compared to the other three selected provinces, Nan's city centre is the least congested with 54.61% of insured persons. The Nan SSRO's service was the most satisfied by its users (see Table 4.3). Undertaking the P&F project, the Nan SSRO decided to expand their service accesses within remote areas rather than stay at rest in their central office.

Figure 4.5 Number of insured persons in Nan, by district



Source: - Map from National Statistics Office, website, accessed on 21 February 2012  
 - Number of insured persons from SSO (2011)

In conclusion, Chiang Mai, the second largest city in Thailand and the largest and most affluent province in the North, was selected to represent the situation in a commercial province<sup>11</sup>. Lamphun represents the situation in an industrial area since it is a province in which an industrial park is located. Phrae is an agricultural province

<sup>11</sup> Its area is 20,107 square metres which seconds Nakonratchasima with 20,493 sq.m. Its Gross Provincial Product (GPP) in 2009 is 126,486 millions baht (£2529.72 millions).

representing the situation in areas of low income and low population density<sup>12</sup>. In general, Nan is similar to Phrae in terms of agricultural characteristic but the number of enterprises and insured persons in Nan is less than in Phrae. Before proceeding, however, it should be emphasised that service recipients' satisfaction in Table 4.3 partially reflect the recipients' perception of the SSRO's responsiveness. The satisfaction survey shows that Nan is the most satisfied case (78.86%) while Lamphun is the least satisfied (67.80%) (Thammasat University Research and Consultancy Institute, 2007, p.122).

Considering its methodology, this Thammasat University's survey is interestingly based on five appraisal criteria (process, staff, place, benefits, ethics) embracing several important attributes of service delivery. It is also the most-elaborated study of provincial social insurance service provision found in two research databases – ThaiLIS and the MoL's database. Although there are other interesting studies with focuses on the satisfaction of the SSO's service provision and success factors (e.g. Jiasakul, 2006; Research and Development Division (SSO), 2006), their findings only illustrate the national, not provincial, picture. In other words, they do not compare the differences between provinces. Also, many studies on the satisfaction and administration of provincial social insurance are carried out but neither of their methodology nor findings are convincing. This research thus draws upon Thammasat University study to gain service users' perspective.

#### *4.1.2.2 Provincial employment structure*

As the provinces were selected based on their economic contexts, it is necessary to clarify how employment structure in each province is different from the nation and the other selected provinces. This is also to emphasise each province's distinctive characteristics. Figure 4.6 compares each case with the overall picture of Thailand. Generally speaking, despite little difference from the agricultural industry, the service industry is the biggest employer in the economic sector; whereas, the

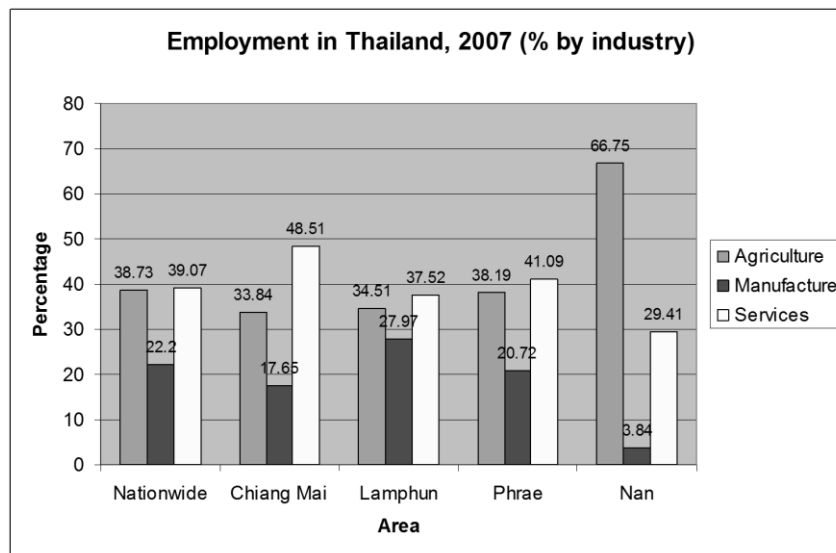
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<sup>12</sup> Density of population in Phrae is 72 persons/m<sup>2</sup> which is much lower than the density of a whole country with 123 persons/m<sup>2</sup> Annual personal income of Phrae is 48,937 baht of is also much lower compared to the country with 150,118 baht. (Thailand's National Statistics Office, website).



manufacturing sector is the smallest industry in Thailand. Three provinces – Phrae, Lamphun, Chiang Mai – seemingly fit into this pattern. Considering each case individually, Phrae is the most similar to the national picture while Chiang Mai, Lamphun, and Nan are special cases. The percentage of service sector employment in Chiang Mai is much higher than average. Also, the percentage of manufacturing employment in Lamphun is much higher than the overall. Outstandingly, Nan is similar to neither the overall nor the first three provinces. Its economic structure predominantly depends upon the agricultural sector.

Figure 4.6 Percentage of employed person by industry, 2007



Source: National Statistics Office, Thailand

These patterns produce three differences among the four provinces: the proportion of S/M/L-sized enterprises, the proportion of employees by enterprise size, and the number of labour union in the province. The first difference is the proportion of S/M/L-sized enterprises (see Table 4.2). Figure 4.7 compares percentages of small-sized enterprises in each area and nationwide. More than 90 percent of enterprises are small-sized everywhere but it is worth noting that Nan and Phrae are provinces of which percentages of small enterprises are exceptionally high (98.3% and 97.7% respectively). Also, Figure 4.8 shows that all selected provinces share the same pattern of the proportion of medium (M), large (L), extra-large (XL) sized enterprise

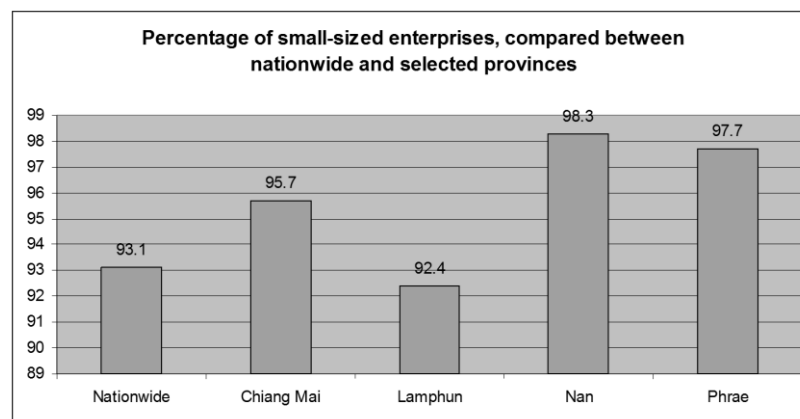
as the national pattern. Medium-sized is the most, large-sized is the second, and extra-large is the last. Noticeably, extra-large sized enterprises do not exist in Phrae and Nan. This is different from the existence of extra-large enterprises in overall (0.2%), Chiang Mai (0.05%), and Lamphun (0.6%). Lamphun's figure is relatively much higher than the national one which fits with its degree of industrial area.

Table 4.5 Number and percentage of enterprises, by province and size of enterprise

Province	Total	Small-sized (0-49)		Medium-sized (50-199)		Large-sized (200-999)		Extra Large-sized (≥ 1000)	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Nationwide	382,170	355,631	93.1	19,640	5.1	6130	1.6	769	0.2
Chiang Mai	12,171	11,648	95.7	421	3.45	96	0.8	6	0.05
Lamphun	1,935	1,788	92.4	85	4.4	50	2.6	12	0.6
Phrae	1,738	1,698	97.7	35	2	5	0.3	-	-
Nan	1,530	1,504	98.3	23	1.5	3	0.2	-	-

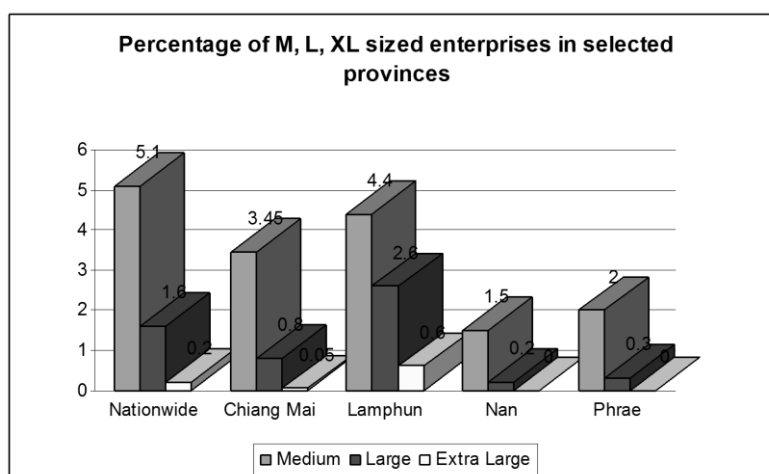
Source: Annual Report 2008 (Social Security Office, 2009b)

Figure 4.7 Percentage of small-sized enterprises in selected provinces



Source: Annual Report 2008 (Social Security Office, 2009b)

Figure 4.8 Percentage of medium, large, and extra-large sized enterprises in selected provinces



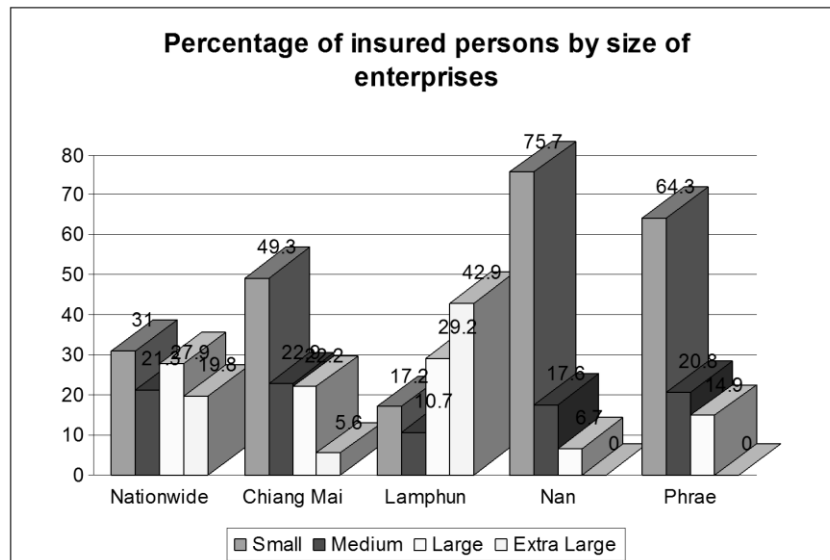
Source: Annual Report 2008 (Social Security Office, 2009b)

Consequently, it is assumed that a large enterprise tends to become involved in SIBD more than a small enterprise. Lamphun, as an industrial province, has 12 enterprises with more than 1000 employees each. The Lamphun SSRO provided an extra service channel at the provincial Government Counter Service (GCS) in Lamphun's biggest shopping mall located next to the industrial park. This service was open until 8pm which served workers after works. Chiang Mai as a commercial province has six XL-sized enterprises but the Chiang Mai SSRO, curiously, has never undertaken similar projects. In Phrae and Nan, no large enterprise exists. The provinces are agricultural areas in which a large number of small-and-medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) exist. The Phrae and Nan SSRO did not provide an additional service similar to Lamphun. Therefore, it is likely that large enterprises influence the Lamphun SSRO's decision.

Secondly, the proportion of enterprises apparently affects the proportion of employees by enterprise size. This proportion of insured persons is significant to the SSRO in providing the channel of SIBD. In other words, it influences the SSRO's decision-making resulting in the variation in SIBD channel. Figure 4.9 exhibits the composition of various sizes of enterprises in each province and the nation. Nationally, the percentage of employees in small-sized enterprises is the highest;

second is in large-sized; third medium-sized; and, fourth extra-large sized. None of the selected provinces shares this pattern. The only similarity is that the highest percentage of insured persons in the provinces, except Lamphun, is in small-sized enterprises. Distinctively, Lamphun bear a unique characteristic in which 72.1% of insured persons are employed in large and extra-large sized enterprises.

Figure 4.9 Percentage of insured persons by size of enterprises



Source: Annual Report 2008 (Social Security Office, 2009b)

Considering this data facilitates as expected the analysis of SIBD diversity and affirms that a link between the SSRO's initiatives and employees' needs exists. In comparison among the four provinces, the highest number of insured persons is in Chiang Mai (see Table 4.3). The Chiang Mai SSRO emphasises the internet and bank channel in delivering the benefits. Lamphun has around one-third of Chiang Mai but the concentration of insured persons, almost half, is in extra-large sized enterprises situated in the city. The Lamphun SSRO cooperates with the Lamphun Governor's Office and creates a special channel of delivery in the shopping centre close to the industrial park. In Phrae and Nan, the employees in SMEs are the majority of insured persons. The Phrae and Nan SSRO similarly initiated the project of cooperation with local governments in SIBD in order to enhance the accessibility of services to the insured persons in remote areas.

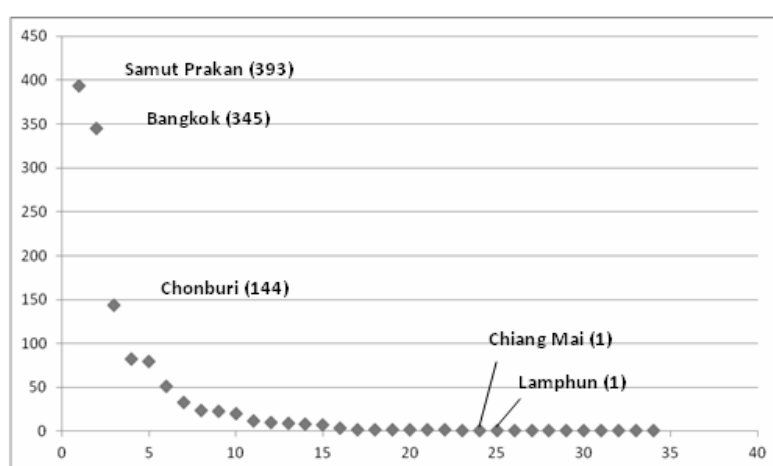
Table 4.6 Number and percentage of insured persons, by province and size of enterprise

Province	Total	Small-sized (0-49)		Medium-sized (50-199)		Large-sized (200-999)		Extra Large-sized ( $\geq 1000$ )	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Nationwide	8,779,131	2,715,936	31	1,873,721	21.3	2,448,295	27.9	1,741,179	19.8
Chiang Mai	174,380	86,010	49.3	39,884	22.9	38,803	22.2	9,683	5.6
Lamphun	77,196	13,279	17.2	8,218	10.7	22,579	29.2	33,123	42.9
Nan	10,715	8,111	75.7	1,887	17.6	717	6.7	-	-
Phrae	16,092	10,347	64.3	3,350	20.8	2,395	14.9	-	-

Source: Annual Report 2008 (Social Security Office, 2009b)

Thirdly, the number of labour unions in each province also varies, resulting in a variety of employee organisation's roles (see Figure 4.10). In Lamphun, two labour unions exist; one of them is active in terms of seeking for labour rights and welfare in the workplace (Prachathai, 2008a). There is no information for another one so far. Therefore, the preliminary assumption is that the active one might get involved in SIBD and influence the SSRO's decision-making. In Chiang Mai, one labour union is registered but has never appeared in any media until now. Its role is still unclear. Lastly, labour unions do not exist in Phrae and Nan.

Figure 4.10 Number of Labour Unions in Four Selected Provinces



Note: While one labour union exists in Chiang Mai and Lamphun; none exists in the other two selected provinces (Nan and Phrae)

Source: Labour Relations Bureau, website, last updated January 2011, accessed on 24 September 2012

In conclusion, three differences – the proportion of S/M/L enterprises, the dispersion of insured persons in various enterprise sizes, the number of labour unions – among the four provinces not only distinguish them from the national pattern but also illustrate the unique characteristics of each province.

#### 4.1.3 Selection of respondents

Prospective respondents were mainly selected regarding an analytical framework in Chapter 3 and a list of Provincial Social Security Subcommittee (PSSS). Firstly, Chapter 3 outlines three types of organisations involved in social insurance administration: governments, employers, and employees. Although three types of governments get involved, this is considered in the two levels of policy-making and policy-implementation. Secondly, in the initial fieldwork, a list of PSSS members was secured. This list comprises: the SSRO as a secretary, the governor as a chair, four internal offices (Employment Office, Labour Office, Work Welfare and Protection Office, Labour Development Centre), the Public Health Office, the provincial hospital, additional office(s) appointed by the SSRO, representative(s) of employee organisations, and representative(s) of employer organisations (see Section 3.2.4). Since cooperation with local organisations exists in Nan and Phrae, local governments are included in the selection of respondents. Consequently, two types of respondents (PSSS members and project participants) are listed and the number of provincial actors varies across provinces depending on the size of the province and the SSRO's cooperation with local governments (see Table 4.5).

Table 4.7 The number of potential SIBD actors in selected provinces

Actors	Chiang Mai	Lamphun	Phrae	Nan
(1) PSSS members	14	11	11	11
(2) Project participants	-	-	30 (CLO project)	99 (P&F project)
Total number: (1) + (2)	14	11	41	110

To summarise, Nan is the province with the highest number of actors in SIBD (110 actors). Eleven PSSS members were appointed as there are 12,365 insured persons registered. 99 cooperating local organisations are involved in SIBD in the project of ‘Thinking Partners and Friends of Insured Persons (P&F)’. Secondly, Phrae is the province in which 11 members of the PSSS were appointed as 16,479 insured persons are registered in the province. Also, since the Phrae SSRO underwent the CLO project which cooperated with 30 local organisations, 41 actors were involved in the Phrae SIBD. Thirdly, Chiang Mai with 178,108 insured persons had 14 members of the PSSS appointed without any cooperating organisations as additional actors. Lastly, Lamphun with 78,338 insured persons is similar to Chiang Mai in terms of no additional local actors.

Ideally, at least one respondent from each actor should be interviewed. In total, therefore, there are 58 selected respondents including: 1 in Bangkok, 16 in Chiang Mai, 13 in Lamphun, and 14 each in Phrae and Nan (see Table 4.6). Judgmental and purposive sampling techniques were employed to select prospective respondents. At the policy-level, the Director General of the SSO is selected to delineate the influence of the SSO towards SIBD at the provincial level. At the implementation-level, the Chief of the SSRO in each province was selected to represent public managers. This is to clarify the relations of the SSRO with either governmental or non-governmental organisations in the province and to understand the decision-making process within the organisation. Also, since two heads of back office and front office of the SSRO play the role of coordinator between operatives and the Chief, they were interviewed to gain additional understanding on the decision-making process.

Table 4.8 A list of respondents in each selected province

Type of Respondent	Respondent	Bangkok	Chiang Mai	Lamphun	Phrae	Nan
Policy maker	Director-general of the SSO	√√				
Policy implementer	Chief of the SSRO		√	√	√	√
	Head of front office (SSRO)		X	X	√	√
	Head of back office (SSRO)		X	√	√	X
Cooperating actor at the provincial level	Provincial Governor		√	√	√	√
	Chief of EO		√	√	√	√
	Chief of LO		√	X	√	√
	Chief of LWPO		√	√	√	√
	Director of LSDC		√	√	√	√
	Chief of PHO		X	√	√	√
	Director of PH		√	√	X	√
	Chief of offices appointed as PSSS		√√	√	√	√
	Employer representative		X√	X	X	X
	Employee representative		√√	√	√	X
	Local government officers				√√	√
Total*	58(48)	1(2)	16(12)	13(10)	14(13)	14(11)

\*x(y) = number of prospect interviewees (number of completed interviews)

Three points should be noted here. Firstly, none of the clerical officers in the SSRO were selected, for two reasons. One reason is that the focus of this research is on the perceptions of higher-level actors about the degree of diversity and decentralisation in the delivery system. This is obviously not a matter related to front-line staffs. Another reason is that since each SSRO has at least 20 officials, interviews with all operatives were practically impossible due to limited time. Instead of interviewing street-level bureaucrats, two heads of front and back offices were interviewed. As the heads work with the operatives more often than the chief, it was expected that interviewing them could clarify work process at the closer level to service recipients in addition to their perceptions about diversity and decentralisation. Secondly, for local organisations, data for fieldwork preparation was insufficient to purposively



select one out of 30 (Phrae) or 99 (Nan) so the prospect respondent of each local organisation was designated to be only one before the fieldwork started.

Thirdly, none of service users i.e. insured persons were selected. The major aim of this research is to understand decision-making mechanism of SIBD which is somewhat state-centric. Rarely do service users technically participate in the SIBD decision-making. Although there are employee representatives in the PSSS (see Section 3.3.4), their representativeness and participation in the decision-making remains questionable according to how they are selected. In other words, even the representative is unlikely active in the PSSS (see Section 3.3.2). It is more likely that service users have impacts on the decision-making through another mechanism such as the SSO's or the SSRO's feedback evaluations (see for example Thammasat University, 2007). Hence, although this research does not interview any of insured persons, it does not mean that the insured are opted out as an actor in SIBD. Rather, this research is aware that service users are important feedback providers with unlikely participation in SIBD decision-making.

## **4.2 Data collection**

This section aims to answer the following questions. What are data types, sources, and format of interest? What are methods of data collection? Why were the methods selected? How did the researcher access the data? How was data collection plan being operated during the fieldwork? When the data collection did not go to plan, how did the researcher manage it? What was the limitation in collecting data for this research? And, what are ethical issues of concern?

As mentioned in Section 4.1, sources of data for this research are 'natural social setting' and 'social artefacts' being analysed at three levels: micro-social, meso-social and macro-social. The individual perspectives of policy actors involved in provincial SIA are concerned at the micro-level in order to understand results and the process of negotiation between actors. At the meso-level, Social Security Regional Offices (SSROs) are of major concern in order to understand their structures and functions in the social insurance system and their cooperating organisations are

considered as policy actors involved in the SSROs' service delivery. At the macro-level, the social insurance system, particularly its regional administration, is a unit of analysis.

Two data types of concern are primary data (collected by interviews) and tertiary data (collected from documents e.g. minutes of meeting, research reports, and official statistics). Numerical data such as the amount of benefit or public spending on Thailand's social insurance are considered as research background; however, qualitative data is the main form utilised. The data collection was planned to be predominantly conducted through qualitative methods: documents and interviews. Secondly, since interviews 'can get close to the social actors' meanings and interpretations, to their accounts of the social interaction in which they have been involved (Blaikie, 2009, p. 207)', they were utilised to achieve the data on the roles of policy actors in practice and to reflect the relations between one another in the system.

Research fieldwork was planned in two phases lasting for six months in total. The first phase was three months (December 2010 – February 2011); the second was three months (October – December 2011). Indeed, collecting data within a single period benefits in several ways such as continuity of data, a constant relationship with gatekeepers, and lower cost especially for travel expenses. However, dividing data collection into two periods also has its own advantages. It provides room for the researcher to review the data collected in the first fieldwork phase. As a result, in the second fieldwork phase, the researcher could consider the data in hands, identify the gaps, and eventually fulfil those gaps in the first phase. In other words, the first fieldwork was to pave the way and established the ground for data collection. The second phase was to ensure the completion of listed interviews.

In the first phase, three main outcomes were expected: an evaluation of data access, connection establishment, and gathering the in-house documents. An ultimate aim of the first phase was to evaluate the accessibility of required data. Since most of the data reviewed to make a plan of data collection were accessed either online or through libraries in the UK, it was possible that the plan would not reflect the

accessibility of data in practice. Another aim was to establish the connection with all organisations of interest including the SSO, the Phrae SSRO, the Lamphun SSRO, and the Chiang Mai SSRO. This could lead to the access of either documents or interviews specified in the original plan (see Table 4.6). Lastly, it was expected that, in addition to the tentative data specified in the original plan, more interviewees and documents could be identified. The second phase of data collection basically aimed to fulfil the gaps of the first phase. The process of accessing the data was the same but the contact persons were changed in some cases. In this phase, references from insiders in social insurance system were available so that some data which was not available in the first phase became more accessible.

In both fieldworks, two research methods – documents and interviews – were employed with supplementary data from observational methods. Documents were accessed through three channels including library, online database, and government offices. Libraries were in Thailand; online databases were searched in Thai and English languages; and selected government offices included the SSO and the SSROs in selected provinces (see Section 4.2.2). Interviews were conducted in five provinces (Bangkok, Phrae, Nan, Lamphun, Chiang Mai) with 58 selected respondents. In-person interviews were more preferable to telephone interviews because doing interview is not only about conversation with (verbal data) but also observation of (non-verbal data) the interviewees. Still, when necessary, telephone interviews were undertaken and data was recorded in the form of field notes. Observation is undertaken in an unobtrusive – non-structured, non-participant, uncontrolled – way in all sites of the study. Notably, for an additional province (Nan), all plans of data collection designed for the three originally-selected cases were applied.

#### **4.2.1 Searching for access**

Data access could be classified into two groups: governmental organisations (i.e. SSO, SSRO, provincial governor, provincial offices, local governments) and non-governmental organisations (i.e. employer representative, employee representative, private hospital). The former is access for both documents and interviews; the latter

is access for interviews only. Firstly, to access documents or obtain interview permission in public organisations, a single process was undergone at the same time with the same contact persons. The researcher needed to make a telephone call in prior to official letter submission, wait for the response, and then access the data. Similarly, to get interview permission with non-governmental organisations, the researcher required to these same three steps. However, apparently, this process was less formal and bureaucratic. Sometimes no official letters were required.

#### *4.2.1.1 Government organisations*

There are three ways to explain how the researcher accessed data in government offices including: by process, by method, and by province. In general, the process of accessing official documents in Thailand can be summarised into four steps: making a phone call, submitting a letter of data access request, waiting for the response, and accessing the data permitted. The first step was substantial because the researcher needed to explain the research topic and inquire regarding the possible date and time of interview. Sometimes, when it was not convincing enough, the researcher needed to go to the office and explain it in person. Then, letters provided for each organisation were delivered either by fax or in person. During the waiting time, the researcher needed to call the contact persons several times to confirm the result.

Accessing data in government organisations can also be presented as three different methods: official letter, telephone, and recommended contact person. Formal letters of data access permission were required by all offices. Although government offices abide by the Official Information Act (certain types of data must be provided for public), all contacted offices asked for official letters. In all instances, a similar reason was given; ‘it is necessary that this data request be approved by the Chief/Director’.

Telephone calls were made to request the data in many ways. This could be clarified over four different periods: before the first fieldwork, during the first fieldwork, the period in between two fieldworks, and during the second fieldwork. Before the first fieldwork, two offices, Phrae and Lamphun SSRO, were contacted on the phone

asking if they could send the data via email. Both of them agreed to send emails; however, only one email from Phrae was received. During the first fieldwork, some organisations were contacted on the phone and official letters were submitted to the office by fax instead of in person. This is because some organisations, particularly local governments, were situated in remote areas. Travel to some places may take at least two hours one way. During the preliminary analysis in between the two data collection phases, or the preparation for the second fieldwork, the researcher made a phone call from the UK to the selected offices to ask for the permission and submit the letters by email. Then, in the second fieldwork phase, the process was the same as in the first phase.

Gatekeepers recommended by either the researcher's acquaintances or the previous interviewees were contacted only after the first fieldwork. This channel was used only in accessing data in some organisations in Chiang Mai and Lamphun. Since these organisations seemed to require not only official letters and brief introduction of the research, the researcher needed to provide references from 'insiders'.

#### *4.2.1.2 Non-governmental organisations*

Similar to the process of accessing data in government organisations, searching for permission to interview with either an employer or employee representative required to commence from making a phone call. To specify the preliminary date and time of interview, phone calls were made to all potential interviewees. Contact numbers were accessed either online or through the SSRO. For example, in the case of a representative of employer organisations in Lamphun, the contact was suggested by the SSRO. Conversely, in the case of the employer representative in Phrae, the contact number was found on the respondent's company website.

However, the second step varied depending on each respondent's personality. Some respondents needed no official letters; some requested it for more information. For example, a Lamphun employee representative agreed to be interviewed on the first day of contact. The appointment was set and the interview was undertaken at the same time he read the letter. In a different manner, an employer representative in

Phrae requested the letter and passed it to his secretary to arrange the interview with the researcher.

#### **4.2.2 Documents**

‘Documentary research’ was employed as a data collection method of this research because the required data are contained in documents and texts both official and unofficial in format. According to Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (1992), social and political research must rely almost exclusively on data which is mostly available in documents and artefacts. This research focuses on diversification of Thailand’s social insurance administration at regional level. It is necessary to understand the background and history of the administrative system which can be found in research, studies, textbooks, and government documents. Also, documentary research was employed because ‘a document does not only represent a reflection of a correspondence between its description and the events to which it refers but also represents the practical requirements for which they were constructed (May, 2001, p.176)’.

Documents, containing tertiary data, were collected in order to: understand background of the Thai social insurance administration, set the interview guideline, and triangulate the data gathered from the interviews. It was expected that investigating documents could highlight area of concern in this research such as implementation processes and activities. According to Scott (cited in May, 2001, p.178), a ‘document’ is ‘physically embodied texts, where the containment of the text is the primary purpose of the physical medium’. It is ‘evidence[s] containing messages either in text or picture format (May, 2001: 180)’. Also, since a document has the potential to inform and structure the decisions which people make on a daily and longer term basis, employing this method is supposed to delineate the decision-making process of Thailand’s social insurance administration e.g. the rationale behind actions in the policy arena and negotiations between policy actors. Additionally, the means for doing so are to utilize the idea of a constant that may be invoked to demonstrate the gradual unfolding of history in terms of progress (May, 2001: 176-177).

Two types of documents, official documents and academic works, considered in this research were in public sources. All official documents specified in Table 4.7 were usually kept in the offices where they were produced. The number of researches and theses on social insurance in libraries is enormous; keywords such as ‘social insurance administration’, ‘regional empowerment’, and ‘administrative decentralisation’ were used to generate the most relevant data.

Two types of access were considered: libraries and government offices. Firstly, five government offices of interest were in Thailand including: the SSO, Phrae SSRO, Lamphun SSRO, Chiang Mai SSRO, and Nan SSRO. Most of the documents were only in Thai; some provided an English version such as annual reports of the SSO. After search results were generated, selecting the most relevant documents was based on four criteria: authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning (see the following sub-section). Secondly, the SSO’s Library was a source of government documents and archives on Thailand’s social insurance. As the SSO is a major organisation responsible for social insurance administration, it was expected that most of the documents and archives on the general background of social insurance would be found in this library.

Notably, it is necessary to differentiate between documents and literature. Table 4.7 aims to provide an overall picture of prospective texts. However, it is a mixture of documents and literature. To be clear, ‘document’ considered as data of this research is the texts – e.g. minutes of meeting, reports, plans, strategies – produced by the selected government offices (see Section 4.1.2). On the other hand, literatures are summarised and presented earlier in Chapter 2. Yet, ‘documentary research is not a clear cut and well-recognized category. It can hardly be regarded as constituting a method’ (Platt in May, 2001: 176). Being aware of this, another research method, interviewing, is employed to strengthen, sometimes supplement, findings of the research. This will be clarified later in the next section.

Table 4.9 List of documents and sources

Document type	Source	Type of source	Expected data	Objective	
				Primary objective	Secondary objective
Official documents	Social Security Office	Government office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Five-year strategy</li><li>- Annual plan and projects</li><li>- Budget by province</li><li>- Annual reports</li><li>- Government-funded researches</li><li>- Laws and regulations</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- To define the policy intent and the SSO’s role in SIBD</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- To identify the significance of the SSO’s policy towards the SSRO’s performance and decision</li></ul>
	Social Security Regional Office <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Chiang Mai</li><li>- Phrae</li><li>- Lamphun</li><li>- Nan</li></ul>	Online database, government office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Annual reports</li><li>- Action plan</li><li>- Projects</li><li>- Annual budget</li><li>- Minute of Meeting</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- To understand the SSRO’s external and internal environments</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- To identify particular projects differing from the ones decided by the SSO</li><li>- To analyse the actors involving in the provincial SIBD</li></ul>
Completed research	Ministry of Labour	Online database	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Research reports</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- To survey relevant policy actors in the perspectives of other scholars and students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- To develop the analytical framework from the existing knowledge</li><li>- To find the gap of existing knowledge of social insurance administration in Thailand</li></ul>
	ThaiLis	Online database	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Theses</li><li>- Research reports</li></ul>		
	Chulalongkorn University	University libraries			
	Thammasat University				
	NIDA				
	Chiang Mai University				



#### 4.2.2.1 Keywords for Generating Data

There are four major key terms for generating data; ‘regional empowerment’, ‘administrative decentralisation’, ‘social insurance administration’, and ‘initiative project’. While ‘*regional empowerment*’ focuses on the matter of how the central unit empowers its provincial offices politically; ‘*administrative decentralisation*’ emphasises how administrative system is being decentralised. ‘*Social insurance administration*’ is defined as ‘processes and systems of delivering social insurance benefit (SIB) delivery’. Notably, SIBD means the services provided by the SSRO in order to deliver all seven benefits of social insurance in Thailand. This research focuses on how delivery agencies serve their insured persons (services) not how the amount of each benefit is decided (rules). The last keyword ‘*initiative project*’ means the project which is originated by the SSRO in response to local needs.

#### 4.2.2.2 Logic of Selecting Documents

There are four criteria for assessing the data available from documentary sources; meaning, authenticity, credibility, and representativeness (Scott in May, 2001: 189-190). ‘Meaning’ refers to the clarity and comprehensibility of a document to the analyst. To find documents with the relevant meaning, the researcher considers the search results twice. First, the search results were scanned roughly through the titles of each search result. If the title appeared to be relevant, it was shortlisted. Second, the abstract or summary or contents of each item in the short list was read thoroughly in order to confirm that the selected documents were relevant to the researcher topic.

‘Authenticity’, whether the document is genuine and original, is evaluated by following a few questions provided by Forster (in May, 2001: 189); ‘*Are the data genuine? Are they from a primary or secondary source? Are they actually what they appear to be? Are they authentic copies of originals?*’ It is imperative that documents in this research need to be genuine. For example, the book ‘Social Security in Thailand’ was written by the Thai Social Security Division in 1973. It is the first and only one edition usually found in the government publication zone of university libraries. Its content has never been altered as it is a published book and

secured in the library. The book cover also shows the official number of the document, 'Document No.69 Book No.1/1973', therefore, apparently, this copy was published in the year of 1973 by the government organisation.

To assure 'credibility', another set of questions were employed. *Are the people who record the information reliable in their translations of the information that they receive? How accurate were their observations and records?* From the previous example, since the author is the government, it is doubtful that the information is from only one perspective and it is perhaps written in the way the government wants the readers to believe. Therefore, it is necessary to find other documents to argue or support the data within in order to avoid bias. Apparently, different authors construct different data. In order to gain unbiased and accurate data, the authors are categorised into three groups; governments, academics, and individuals, and the search documents was based on these categories. Although some documents may still lack credibility, it can be increased by triangulation.

Since political research cannot easily find a typical document because most documents were subjectively written by each political side (May, 2001), 'representativeness', referred to as 'typically', in this research is only found in the SSO's documents. A series of the SSO's strategies (1990-2015) are considered to be typical documents representing the SSO's opinion. Contrarily, other documents cannot be identified as representative because each of them presents perspectives of policy actors variably.

#### *4.2.2.3 Collection Summary*

The following presents results of access in two phases of data collection. Firstly, during December 2010 – March 2011, four offices – the SSO (in Bangkok), Phrae SSRO, Lamphun SSRO and Chiang Mai SSRO – were approached. Letters to request permission were submitted to all offices; the responses, however, varied. Although they are all under the same laws (i.e. SSA and Official information Act) and the SSO's policies (open access of official data), each of them provided different reasons in granting data access to the researcher. Firstly, the SSO's library and

Information Center (situated in the same building as the SSO) provided all information required to be revealed under the Official Information Act. Also, in implementing their open access policy, they provided an accessible and convenient space for anybody who would like to read the data.

Besides, two divisions of the SSO – Division of Research and Development and Division of Administrative System Development – were contacted in person. Firstly, it was expected that Division of Research and Development could provide a research report on the topic of the SSO's regional administration. According to online information, the Division offered funding for researchers to carry out research under such a topic. However, the official said that the funding was cancelled in response to the Director-General's suggestion. Although the expected document did not exist, the official suggested another documents relevant to this research topic instead (see Chaiwong *et al*, 2006).

In contrast, the Division of Administrative System Development<sup>13</sup> refused to give access to the data. The officials contacted were curious about this research project's focus on diversity of social insurance administration at the provincial level. They believed that all projects of the SSRO should uniformly comply with the SSO's policies. They wondered whether the issue of this research was worth studying. Interestingly, although they were working for the Division which was supposed to be relatively non-bureaucratic<sup>14</sup>, their attitudes appeared to be somewhat bureaucratic. They mentioned that no matter what happened the SSRO should follow the SSO's policies<sup>15</sup> but paradoxically they also admitted that the SSRO should respond to local needs.

Three SSROs were requested for data access: Phrae, Lamphun, and Chiang Mai. In comparison among the three SSROs, the Phrae SSRO enthusiastically welcomed and granted data access to the researcher. Since the first time of contact in person, they allowed the data access without hesitation. The head of the back office not only tried

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<sup>13</sup> This division is in charge of structural and administrative development of the SSO.

<sup>14</sup> Another informal label of them is the 'little Office of Public Sector Development Reform Commission (OPDC)' which implies that they should be working under the New Public Management Approach. The OPDC is a facilitator and regulator of Thailand's bureaucratic system reform.

<sup>15</sup> 'This is a bureaucratic system; we could not do much about it' the official stated.

to give most of the obtainable data, regarding the Act and the SSO's policies, but also willingly explained the structure of the SSRO to the researcher. Although some documents specified in the letter of data access request were not available at the time, the head told the researcher that the SSRO would inform the researcher later whether the data was accessible. Surprisingly, the SSRO took only a week to consider the letter and allowed the researcher to access the data.

In the case of the Lamphun SSRO, the consideration of the data access request was relatively slow and not all data requested was accessible. Three of four documents requested in the submitted letter were given. Requested documents included: structure and authority of the SSRO, vision and policies of the SSRO, annual plans and projects of the SSRO, and statistics of benefit claims in Lamphun. The document which was not given was plans and projects of the SSRO. The reason they stated was that some information was confidential. However, in fact, this data was supposed to be disclosed to the public under the Official Information Act.

The Chiang Mai SSRO was the slowest one in responding to the data access request; two out of four requested data were given including the statistics and the SSRO's structure. They stated that the SSRO's vision, policies, annual plans and projects were the same as the SSO's; thus the researcher could access them through the SSO. Therefore, the researcher requested the additional data, the name list of the PSSSC, instead of insisting on getting those data. However, eventually, they informed the researcher that, at the moment, they were too busy to provide the requested data for the researcher due to the newly launched SSO's policy on coverage expansion.

At the end of the first fieldwork phase, to substitute for the inaccessible data of the SSRO, the researcher decided to gather as much data as possible from the SSO instead. For instance, although the information on annual plans and projects of Chiang Mai and Lamphun SSRO were inaccessible, the data in the SSO's annual plans could be substituted. These annual plans not only presented an overall plan and budget of Thailand's social insurance system but also annual plans and budgets of each province.

Secondly, in October – December 2011, four offices were contacted including the SSROs in Chiang Mai, Lamphun, and Nan and the SSO. There was no need to request more documents from the Phrae SSRO since they were sufficiently supplied in the first fieldwork phase. The Nan SSRO was added as the fourth provinces of case selection due to its distinctive project. Briefly, responses from all offices were better than in the first phase. This could possibly be because the researcher had learned how to establish the connection with each office from the first fieldwork. All documents requested from each office was given but the quantity of data varied. For instance, while the Nan SSRO gave several minutes of the PSSS meetings from 2006-2010; the Chiang Mai SSRO gave only one minute of one PSSS meeting.

#### **4.2.3 Interviews**

Since this research aims to understand the practice of SIA, the interview was selected as a method because ‘the emphasis [of interview] must be on how the interviewees frames and understands issues and events – that is, what the interviewee views as important in explaining and understanding events, patterns, and forms of behaviour (Bryman, 2008)’. The research highlights a period of policy-implementation process in order to answer the core questions; who was involved in the process, how they inter with one another, and what results of the relations or cooperation were. Since public policy implementation needs to follow policies designated by the policy-makers which are written down in texts, documents are expected to give a picture of the written formal process. However, as implementation is ‘a conversion of policy into practice’, although some practices were written down, the data on how the implementation being undertaken in practice is still significant to the research. This data is obviously unavailable through the documents; rather, it is technical knowledge kept by the implementers. Also, although some data can be found in documents, it is necessary to triangulate the data in order to compare between what was written and what was practiced.

Both semi-structured and unstructured interviews were conducted during the fieldwork. Mainly, semi-structured interviews were employed to gather primary data; ‘the researcher has a list of questions or fairly specific topics to be covered... but the

interviewees have a great deal of leeway to reply (Bryman, 2008, p. 438)'. This research employs semi-structured interviews for two main reasons. Due to limited time and opportunity to get an interview, one reason is to ensure that all required data or answers are collected during the interview. Since the research field site is in Thailand, the researcher cannot go back and forth to redo the interview if some data is left behind or some questions are not asked. Also, as all interviewees were in employment and the interview took place during their working hours, the researcher needed to make the most use of the granted period by asking concise and well-organised questions. Another reason is that, reviewing the literature before the fieldwork, a number of questions arise. Some of these can be answered by documentary research; some cannot. To ensure that the interview could cover all those questions, the topic guide was designed.

Unstructured interviews were used with some interviewees including local government officers, regional officials, representatives of employee organisations, and representatives of employer organisations. At the beginning, the researcher introduced the topic of interview and then conducted the interview in conversational style. The main reason was that, although relevant data were reviewed before the interviews started, the data were insufficient to develop the topic guide. The researcher only knew that the interviewees were involved in the SSRO's administration but the details of how they were involved were not mentioned in any documents. Therefore, the researcher prepared for the interviews by studying their organisations or general roles before undertaking the interviews. Then, during the interviews, the researcher took note and developed the questions simultaneously.

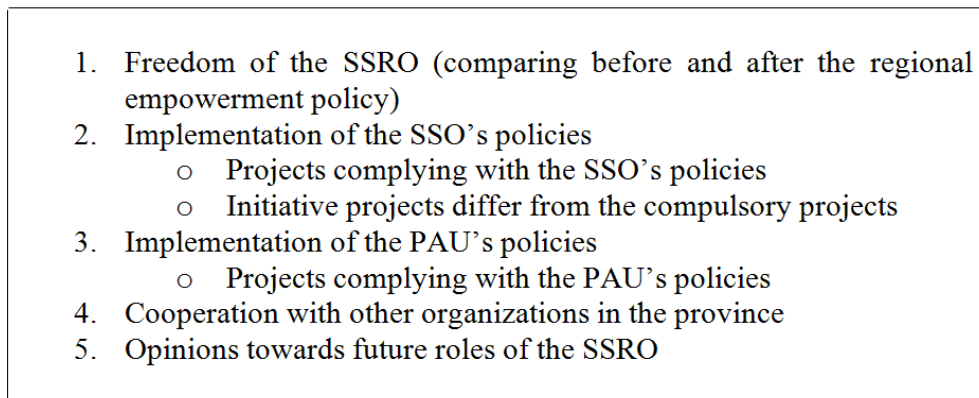
The tentative interviewees (listed in Table 4.6) were selected in accordance with the analytical framework developed from literature reviewed before the first fieldwork. Also, the topic guides of the interviews were preliminarily designed before the fieldwork. After reviewing more documents during the first month of fieldwork, a list of interviewees was confirmed and the topic guides were revised.

#### 4.2.3.1 Topic guide of interview

This section presents discussion in two respects: a list of questions for semi-structured interviews and topics for unstructured interviews. In semi-structured interviews, three sets of topic guides were prepared as follow: for chiefs of the SSRO, the Director-General of the SSO, and the provincial governor. These sets were initially designed before and amended after the fieldwork started.

Firstly, the topic guide for the SSRO Chief was better clarified after the fieldwork started (see Figure 4.12). Four questions were originally designated; five topics were eventually submitted to the interviewees. The first and fifth topics aim to find the chief's opinions toward the SSRO's position in social insurance administration. The second topic investigated how the SSRO implemented the SSO's policies and how the chief and his subordinates worked together to initiate projects. The third topic was to evaluate the influence of the provincial governor on activities of the SSRO. The fourth topic inquired why and how the SSRO cooperated with other organisations in the province.

Figure 4.11 Topic guide of interview for the SSRO chief

- 
1. Freedom of the SSRO (comparing before and after the regional empowerment policy)
  2. Implementation of the SSO's policies
    - Projects complying with the SSO's policies
    - Initiative projects differ from the compulsory projects
  3. Implementation of the PAU's policies
    - Projects complying with the PAU's policies
  4. Cooperation with other organizations in the province
  5. Opinions towards future roles of the SSRO

Secondly, for the SSO's Director-General, two original questions were clarified into three topics (see Figure 4.13). The first topic aimed to investigate the interviewee's attitude towards a centralised administrative system which could be linked to monitoring and controlling the system of the SSO on the SSRO's administration. The second topic was to inquire about the thoughts of the interviewee on empowering the

SSRO. Lastly, the topic aimed to evaluate the tensions between the SSO and the SSRO.

Figure 4.12 Topic guide of interview for the SSO Director-General

1. Centralisation of social insurance administrative system
2. Impacts of the Government's bureaucratic reform policy on social insurance administration
  - a. Decentralisation of social insurance benefit delivery
  - b. Responsiveness of the SSRO
  - c. Freedom of the SSRO
3. Opinions toward initiative projects of the SSRO

Thirdly, two questions for interview with the provincial governor were elaborated into three topics (see Figure 4.14). Since the governor plays two major roles in regional social insurance administration (chair of PSSS and the provincial CEO), the first and second topics were to inquire about the two roles in practice in order to compare with the data gathered from the documents. The third topic sought for the data was on how the governor and the SSRO worked together. In other words, it attempted to identify the negotiation between the two actors.

Figure 4.13 Topic guide of interview for the provincial governor

1. Role of the governor in regional social insurance administration (as the chair of Provincial Social Security Committee)
2. Role of the governor in regional social insurance administration (as an empowered CEO of the province regarding the Integrated Provincial Administration)
3. Opinions towards cooperation with the SSRO (if any)

Interviews with four groups (cooperating provincial offices, employee organisations, employer organisations, local governments) were conducted in unstructured form. Each group was informed of the topic of interview either during the introduction of interview or prior to the meeting. Generally, the topic concerns their role and cooperation with the SSRO. Then, the researcher continued with questions which



originated from the previous answers given by the interviewee. Otherwise, if the researcher gained relevant information from previous interviewees, this information would be used to form a question. These questions also varied among the groups regarding their affiliation and relations to the SSRO. In brief, broad topics were designed before the fieldwork and detailed topics were developed either during the conversation or from existing information the researcher had so far.

#### *4.2.3.2 Collection Summary*

Initially, during the first fieldwork phase, letters of data access request were officially submitted to interviewees in Phrae, Lamphun, Chiang Mai, and Bangkok. As Nan was added later on, all letters for interviewees in Nan were submitted in the second fieldwork period. In five provinces, 48 interviews were completed while 12 respondents were unavailable (see Table 4.6). There were different reasons why some interviews remained undone. Firstly, in Phrae, an employer representative agreed to be interviewed at the beginning but asked to postpone it afterwards. Although the researcher re-contacted the interviewee, the date could not be fixed since the interviewee's secretary referred to a busy schedule.

Secondly, in Nan, both employer and employee representatives were unavailable. The employer, who is the Phrae employer's brother, also claimed that his schedule was unavailable at the proposed time. The employee appointed as the PSSS member was unapproachable. She quit her job and her employer knew nothing about her new contact details. Her mobile number was changed and other contacts (i.e. postal address, home phone) were unavailable. The new employee representative, appointed in late 2011, has never attended the sub-committee meeting. Apparently, she could not provide relevant information.

Thirdly, in Lamphun, the Chief of Labour Office rejected giving an interview. She assigned her assistant for the interview and passed relevant documents to the researcher. Although the conversation happened with the assistant, she reaffirmed her chief's statement that the office had not participated in any of the SSRO's decision making although they were a member of the PSSS. In addition, the head of

the Lamphun SSRO's front office was not interviewed because the head of the back office was simultaneously responsible for back and front offices. Also, similar to the Phrae employer, the Lamphun employer agreed to be interviewed but the confirmation was prolonged until after the fieldwork ended.

Fourthly, four prospect respondents remain to be interviewed in Chiang Mai including: the chief of Public Health Office, two heads of the SSRO, and one of the employer representatives. In the case of the Public Health Office, the answer given was that the office was barely involved in provincial social insurance administration. Accordingly, they were unsure that they could provide any relevant information. The two heads of the SSRO's front and back offices were unwilling to be interviewed due to their busy schedule and continued postponing the date until the fieldwork was finished. For the remaining employer, although contacted several times, he answered the phone call only once and never got back to the researcher afterwards.

Additionally, the number of interviews with the representative of local organisations in Phrae and Nan are different. In Phrae, since there are 30 organisations (22 local governments, 5 local hospitals, and 3 local organisations) cooperating with the Phrae SSRO, all local governments were contacted on the phone using the contact numbers accessed on the Phrae Local Administration Office's website. Some local governments situated in accessible distance were asked if the researcher could visit and interview in person; the further ones were interviewed on the telephone. However, the data from only two local governments are really relevant to and used in the data analysis.

Differently, although the Nan SSRO also operated a cooperation project similar to Phrae, only one out of 99 cooperating local organisations in Nan was selected for two reasons. Firstly, regarding the acquired information from the SSRO, the selected municipality is an organisation with the strongest bond with the SSRO. They provided a temporary office for the SSRO for weekly service provision in their office. Secondly, although a few more local governments were questioned on the phone, their participation was not as much as the selected one. Information they gave

was similar to what was written on the SSRO's documents. Therefore, the researcher decided to focus on a single case with more depth of information rather than all cooperating organisations.

#### **4.2.4 Observation**

Observation was undertaken in supplement to the two major methods (documents and interview) of this research. Doing observation, 'the information is sought by way of investigator's own direct observation without asking from the respondent' (Kothari, 2005, p. 96). It differs from documents and interview in that 'data are collected directly rather than through the reports of a respondent; the observer or measurement device, in essence, becomes the respondent (Lyberg & Kasprzyk, 2004, p. 246)'. Particularly, the researcher is aware of the limitation of interview method as Webb et al. (1966, p.1) suggest that interview 'intrude as a foreign element into the social setting', is limited to those who are accessible and cooperate, and data obtained are produced 'by dimensions of individual differences irrelevant to the topic at hand.'

In other words, data generated from interview are questioned of their 'authentic accounts of subjective experience (Miller & Glassner, 2004, p. 125)'. In interview, perhaps the data desired may be 'unreliable because of either recall difficulties or practical difficulties in obtaining the cooperation of a respondent (Lyberg & Kasprzyk, 2004, p. 247)'. Also, '[E]ven studies based on direct interviews employ observational techniques to note body language and other gestural cues that lend meaning to the words of the persons being interviewed' (Angrosino & Perez, 2003, p. 107). Thus, doing research requires more than 'simply asking' as Lee (2000, p. 1) summarises:

'A problem with this assumption [of 'simply asking'] is that what we gain 'simply by asking' is often shaped by the dynamics surrounding the interaction between researcher and researched. ... One consequence of

this might be a need to accomplish the 'interrogation of experience, attitude and belief' in other, less direct, ways.'

In this research, observation is employed as complementary to interviews and documents. It is expected, as Lee (2000, p. 7) suggests, that 'configuring different methods, each of which is fallible in a different way, gives greater purchase on the problem to hand than on over-reliance on a single method.' Additionally, this research employs an unobtrusive way of observation not only because it is complementary to other methods but also because of its adaptability (see Lee, 2000). With early research experiences, the researcher is thus aware that accesses of documents or interviews could possibly be unavailable and observation may serve the purpose of collecting substitute and sometimes substantial data.

Observational data in this research were generated from unstructured, non-participant and uncontrolled observation. Being unstructured, the observation took place without 'careful definition of the units to be observed, the style of recording the observed information, standardised conditions of observation and the selection of pertinent data of observation (Kothari, 2005, p. 96)' to be thought of in advance. It agrees with Babbie's suggestion (2013, p. 295) that:

'As a field researcher, you'll seldom approach your task with precisely defined hypotheses to be tested. More typically, you'll attempt to make sense out of an ongoing process that cannot be predicted in advance...'

The researcher thus went to the field with the knowledge based on the literature review and many times used topic guides of interview (see Section 4.2.3) as observational guidelines. For example, after the interview with one of the Nan TAOs, the researcher went to observe the Nan SSRO's temporary office situated in the TAO. In contrary to the SSRO's and the TAO's claim that the temporary office was doing well, what the researcher saw is a room with several desks and a signpost 'SSRO's office' lying on one of the desks instead of being stuck on the wall. It is

thus noted that the temporary office may not be doing well as they claimed. This observation was not structured before the interviews with either the SSRO or TAO. It was developed after interview data was gathered in the field.

Being non-participant, the observation occurred in the way ‘the observer observes as a detached emissary without any attempt on his part to experience through participation what others feel (Kothari, 2005, p. 97)’. Gold (1958) suggests four modes of researcher’s roles regarding the degree of involvement: the complete participant, the participant-as-observer, the observer-as-participant, and the complete observer. In this research, the researcher positions herself as a complete observer. Participant observation may enable the researcher more appreciated of selected social process. However, there are dangers that the researched may shift their attention to the research project rather than their natural process and the researcher may ‘go naive and lose much of [his/her] scientific detachment’ (Babbie, 2013, p. 300).

Hence, in attempt to maintain the scientific detachment and nature of the social process, the researcher did not take part in any processes or activities of SIBD decision-making in any way. Observations took place mainly during interviews and visits to all sites of study. In attempt to minimise the researcher’s influence to the researched, gestures of interviewees and physical traces in each office were observed and recorded in field notes without prior notice. Indeed, this type of observation may be sketchy, transitory and less appreciated of social process (Babbie, 2013). Being a complete observer, however, serves the purpose of objectivity. As Adler and Adler (1998, p. 48) suggest, this role ‘most closely approximates the traditional ideal of the “objective” observer,’ although not perfectly.

Similarly, being uncontrolled, the observation took place in natural setting in attempt ‘to get a spontaneous picture of life and persons (Kothari, 2005, p. 97)’. At two opposite ends, controlled observations mostly occur as experiments in laboratories and uncontrolled observations takes place in natural social settings. The former is believed to aid accuracy and standardisation, while the latter likely supply naturalness and completeness of social settings (Kothari, 2005). This research, as

discussed earlier, attempts to minimise intervention in and influence on social settings and process. It aims to understand SIBD from the stakeholders' perspective as much as possible. Thus, uncontrolled observation was undertaken while acknowledging the limitations of this unobtrusive way of observation.

In brief, observational methods are mainly critiqued over its effect of the observer on the observed (Angrosino & Perez, 2003; Barker, 1980; Sechrest & Phillips, 1979), subjective interpretation (Angrosino & Perez, 2003; Kothari, 2005), and questionable validity and reliability (Adler & Adler, 1998). Unobtrusive observation is still undertaken in this research for three reasons. Firstly, this method embodies 'the least potential for generating observer effects' as Adler and Adler (1998, p. 89) argue that '[T]he naturalness of the observer role, coupled with its nondirection, makes it the least noticeably intrusive of all research techniques.'

Secondly, despite its subjectivity, observation when combined with other methods – interviews and documents in this research – could enhance the rigour of data. As Adler and Adler (1998, pp. 89-90) convincingly argues that '[A]lthough direct observation may be marred by researcher biases, at least they are consistent and known. Direct observation, when added onto other research yielding depth and/or breadth, enhance consistency and validity.' The last reason of undertaking observation lies in its emergence. Compared with more structured methods, unobtrusive observation has flexibility to 'yield insight into new realities or new ways of looking at old realities (Adler & Adler, 1998, p. 89)'. It allows the researcher to 'observe subtle communications and other events that might not be anticipated (Babbie, 2013, p. 298)'.

Either interview transcripts or field notes are produced after the interview is finished. All recorded interviews are transcribed in order to provide elaborate data for the analysis. However, in the case that the interviews could not be recorded, field notes are written either during or after the interview. Recording proved unavailable in two cases. Basically, if the interview takes place in person, the researcher always asks to record it. However, some interviewees deny the request; some ask to stop the

recorder in the middle of the interview; some start talking more comfortably after the recorder is switched off. Another case is during telephone interviewing when the researcher could not record it due to the lack of an appropriate device.

Nonetheless, informal conversations happen during the time the researcher visit various offices to introduce the research and search for gatekeepers or interviewees which were taken into consideration as data. Although, according to the research ethics, the information the researcher acquired through these conversations should not be written in the dissertation, some opinions are very interesting and possibly reflect perspectives, for example, of central offices towards regional offices. Therefore, field notes are employed as a supplement method of data collection.

#### **4.2.5 Limitations**

There are three main concerns relating to data collection: the accessibility of data, ethical issues, and limited resources. First, even though most of the tertiary data are in the public domain, some of the official documents might be preserved for secrecy. If this arises, other documents or transcriptions with similar information are consulted instead. On the other hand, if interview permission is rejected, documents are used as a supplement. Second, since the primary data was collected by interviews, informed consent should be considered in terms of ethical issues (more detail in Section 4.3.2). If the tentative interviewees refuse to provide the required information for any reasons, the sample needs to be re-selected or supplemented with documents as mentioned earlier. Finally, since this is PhD research without any funding, the time, personnel, and financial resources are limited. This particularly results in the limitation of data collection both financially and non-financially.

This research design contains both strengths and weaknesses which fall under four issues: a case study research design, a qualitative strategy, the data sources, and the data collection method. Firstly, case study is not a perfect research design; undertaking it has to deal with ‘misconception (Yin, 1994)’. On one hand, taking a case-study approach, this research engenders weaknesses such as a potential lack of generalizability. On the other hand, it has strengths – such as descriptive inferences,

in-depth explanation, internal comparability, insight into causal mechanisms, invariant causal proposition, and exploration within a single unit.

Secondly, this research design lacks a quantitative methodology. For example, it excludes analysis of the magnitudes of resource exchanges and concentrates on perceptions of stakeholders. This may result in classic weaknesses of qualitative research regarding the suggestion that it is too subjective, difficult to replicate, incurs problems of generalisation, and has a lack of transparency (Bryman, 2008, pp. 385-390). Still, this research rests upon five preoccupations of qualitative strategy strengths including: seeing through the eyes of the people being studied, description and the emphasis on context, emphasis on process, flexibility and limited structure, and concepts and theory grounded in data (Bryman, 2008). Further, being aware of such weaknesses, the research is designed as qualitative and case study research due to the research purposes and limitations. Through the combination of using a qualitative strategy and a case study, as Bennett and Elman (2006, p.473) suggests:

‘qualitative methodologists have identified case study methods as: having comparative advantages in developing internally valid and context-sensitive measures of concepts; heuristically identifying new variables through within-case analysis of deviant or other cases; providing a potential check on spuriousness and endogeneity through within-case analysis; and testing and elaborating theories of path dependency and other types of complexity.’

Thirdly, in selecting data sources, this research employs non-probability sampling including purposive sampling and snowball sampling. Although using purposive sampling may raise the question of the representativeness of each sample, the technique has strengths of getting a particular appropriate case and a variety of types of cases for in-depth investigation (Blaikie, 2009, p. 178). . Snowball sampling involves the personal recommendation of a contact. An advantage is that it reveals a network of contacts which can itself be studied; whereas a potential problem is that it only includes those within a connected network of individuals. It also vouches for the legitimacy of the researcher, which is both a strength and potential weakness of the



method (Arber, 1993, p. 74). Thus, this technique is employed with hope to carefully supplement those selected from purposive sampling. Lastly, although doing interview lets the researcher grasp the point of view of the actors, which is strength, the problem is that the interviewees do not give stable or consistent meanings to things, people, and events (Becker, 1996). Consequently, this will intensify the subjectiveness of the research because the data will be interpreted by the researcher. Being aware of this weakness, documentary research and observation are employed to minimise the subjectiveness and triangulate the data.

Doing research requires an awareness of internal and external validity. Documents, interviews and observation are designed to provide the internal validity, or causality (Bryman, 2008, p.32), in this research. Employing documentary research, in terms of authenticity, most of the shortlisted documents are likely genuine. Their content has never been altered as they were published and secured in the library or the government offices. However, some documents were written by the government. In terms of credibility, it is doubtful that the information is from only one perspective and it is perhaps written in the way the government wants the readers to find credible. Therefore, it is necessary to find other documents to argue or support the data within such documents in order to avoid bias.

Interviews and observations were conducted to triangulate the data collected from documents. A set of interview questions was designed in accordance with the data from a literature review and the documentary research. Observation was merely unobtrusive and unstructured in order not to generate observer effects. Likewise, later on, data from the interviews and observations was reviewed together with the data from the documents. Also, different groups of stakeholders were interviewed in order to avoid the bias of each particular group. In an attempt to provide external validity, ‘whether the results of a study can be generalised beyond the specific research context (Bryman, 2008, p.33)’, the three different cases were selected: commercial (Chiang Mai), industrial (Lamphun), and agricultural (Phrae and Nan) areas. Since the production in an economy can be divided into these three main

sectors, it was intended that each case was selected to represent one sector in order to enhance the generalisability of the research results.

Also, the combination of two or more methods in one research, or, in other words, ‘triangulation’ (Blaikie, 2001; Jick, 1979), or ‘mixed-methods’ (Bryman, 2006), can improve the research results. According to Denzin’s four triangulation classifications (in Macdonald & Tipton, 1993), only ‘data triangulation’ was employed in this research. The ‘investigator triangulation’ was not used because there was the only investigator. The ‘theory triangulation’ was not used because the researcher intended to test the model of diversification proposed in Chapter 2. Lastly, although many academics agree that the ‘between-methods’ triangulation could lead to more valid results (Blaikie, 2001; Bryman, 2006; Clasen, 2004; Jick, 1979; Sartori, 1970), this research did not employ the ‘methodology triangulation’ due to the limited time and resources. In brief, although there are problems and limitations which should be of concern, this research attempts to maximise the internal and external validity. It employs the data triangulation in order to minimise the subjectivity and bias of collected data and, in attempt to generalise the research finding, it studies three distinctly different areas.

#### **4.2.6 Ethical Issues**

The discussion of ethical issues is divided into two issues regarding two data collection methods. Firstly, the most crucial ethical issue to be concerned in doing documentary research is whether the documents are closed or restricted. Since all documents I used are in the public domain, it is not necessary to be overly concerned with ethical issues. Secondly, ethical issues, and in particular informed consent, are particularly important when carrying out interviews. I asked for the interviewees’ permission and provided the consent form to be signed before starting the interview with each interviewee. Notably, I respected the rights of the interviewees to refuse to take part in interviews or to answer any specific questions for any reason, in strict compliance with the university ethical guidelines.

In addition, regarding the School of Social and Political Science Research Ethics Framework, this research is considered to fall at level-1 ethical review for five reasons. Firstly, confidentiality of the data was ensured to the interviewees all information would be kept confidential and used for the academic purpose in this research only. Secondly, every respondent was briefly informed about my research project at the time I contacted them asking for their interview permission and again before the interview started. Thus, each of them had enough information to decide whether to give an interview. Also, the collection of personal data was strictly adhered to the consent of the respondents and the respondents' name was anonymised in order to ensure them that the data they gave would not affect their career or life.

Thirdly, since this research is not financially supported by any organisation and I am not receiving any benefits from any organisations for doing this research, there is no issue of conflict of interest to be considered. Also, as a researcher, I bore in mind that the interviewees have the rights to set the time for giving interviews or refuse to give any information. There are no attempts to either explicitly or implicitly pressure the respondents to give more time or information. Fourthly, since the issue of interest and the data collection are not related to any sensitive or harmful incidence, there is no potential physical or psychological discomfort or distress to the researcher or the respondents. Lastly, there is no chance that the proposed research might bring any disrepute to the university.

### **4.3 Data analysis**

First of all, to analyse data, one should be clear on their position regarding ontological and epistemological perspectives. Each of them concerns a different basic question as below (Moses & Knutsen, 2007, p.5):

‘The fundamental question in the field of ontology is: ‘What is the world really made of?’ Epistemology is a more straightforward term; it denotes the philosophical study of knowledge. ‘What is knowledge?’ is the basic question of epistemology.’

To clarify the first question further, ontology ‘involves asking what you see as the very nature and essence of things in the social world (Mason, 1996, p.11)’. In response to this, this research conceptualizes social reality as made up of several components such as actors, relations, actions, narratives, and codes<sup>16</sup> involved in SIBD.

Epistemologically, each component should be asked whether and how it can be known and how knowledge could be generated (Mason, 1996, p. 13). Two ‘ways of knowing’ (naturalism and constructionism, Moses & Knutsen, 2007) seem able to portray answers for this question. With a naturalist’s view, to a certain extent, this research believes that: ‘there exist regularities or patterns in nature that can be observed and described’; ‘statements based on these regularities can be tested empirically’; and, ‘it is possible to distinguish between value-laden and factual statements’ (Moses & Knutsen, 2007, p.9). However, with constructivist’s view, it is also aware that

‘... we do not just experience the world objectively or directly: our experiences are channelled through the human mind ... It is in this short channel between the eye and the brain – between sense perception and the experience of the mind – that we find many challenges to naturalism (Moses & Knutsen, 2007, p.10-11)’.

Thus, although this research uses mediums e.g. texts, narratives, and codes to generate its conclusion and theory, it is always aware that these mediums are all, or partially, constructed. Their power to capture social reality is limited and research findings should never be over claimed as ‘the reality’.

Further, this research combined two approaches of data analysis to convey its findings: content analysis and situational analysis. Instead of selecting a particular approach, the two approaches are employed regarding Mello’s (2002, p.235) suggestion that ‘... if we use multiple forms for data analysis it is more likely that the findings and narratives of research ... will be grounded and, as a result, more likely to

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<sup>16</sup> These are selected from a list provided by Mason (1996, p.11).

be valid'. Indeed, the danger of this multi-method application perhaps lies in the confusing and vague analysis. However, it is suggested that 'data be analysed using more than one operation simultaneously ... [which] allows for a more complex look at the way narrative functions in our informants' lives and encourages us to create and express more complex and interwoven research texts at the summative stages of the work (Mello, 2002, p.236)'. Thus, each approach is employed for a particular purpose which will be clarified in: Section 4.3.1 (content analysis) and Section 4.3.2 (situational analysis). Briefly, the former emphasises the understanding of texts and discourses; the latter provides an additional framework of data analysis and presentation.

#### **4.3.1 Content Analysis: narrative, coding, and counting**

This research employs content analysis as it 'emphasises the fluidity of the text and content in the interpretive understanding of culture (May, 2001, p. 191)'. Also, according to Sedlack and Stanley (1992), it is 'a fertile procedure for investigating any problem or issue for which the content of communication can serve as a basis of inference (p.275)'. Within three types of texts (documents, transcriptions, field notes), contents are considered together with the contexts behind texts and the purpose of the authors or interviewees in order to understand concepts, structures, ideologies, practices and so on, in the system.

Content analysis in this research is undertaken within three steps: describing, classifying, and connecting (see Dey, 1993). Firstly, it is necessary to produce thorough descriptions of the phenomenon being studied including the context of the actions the intentions of social actors, and the processes through which social actions and interactions occur. Secondly, the collected data will be reduced by 'open coding'. It 'involves breaking the data down into categories and subcategories (Blaikie, 2009, p. 211)'. Three categories of data in this research include: roles, relations, and impacts. The first category is divided into three subcategories: policy maker, defined as an actor participating in the decision-making at the policy-level, policy implementer as an actor responsible to practicing and operationalising the policy, and influential actor as an actor who is not implicated in the delivery

provision but shares the same set of beliefs or interests as the implementer. The second category is divided into two subcategories: relationship pattern and resource dependence. The last category is considered in two subcategories: responsiveness and initiative. Lastly, the connections between each category are made to discover regularities, variations and singularities in the data. Notably, since this research also focuses on the variation of SIBD across provinces, not only the data between categories is connected but also the data between the four chosen cases. Then, the theoretical model of SIBD diversification proposed in Chapter 2 is examined.

Applying a conventional view, both quantitative and qualitative approaches of content analysis are applied in this research. Firstly, qualitative content analysis is employed because the data delivered to the audiences always contain two important meanings; ‘detached’ (from context) and ‘engaged’ (with contexts and researchers) (May, 2001, p.182). Therefore, the researcher must carefully generate data from the documents in both meanings. Secondly, quantitative content analysis is ‘a research technique for the systematic, objective, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication (Rourke & Anderson, 2004, p. 5)’. Despite its descriptive characteristic, this analytical method is employed to briefly test and measure policy intent or conceptualization of selected activities.

To explain the data analysis of this research further, however, this section discusses the practicality of data analysis not in regard of the quantitative/qualitative divide which has recently been under question. As Moses and Knutsen (2007, p.293) argue,

‘[T]he quantitative/qualitative divide, if it ever existed, is a relic of the past. Worse, it is a remarkably offensive relic: after all, this divide implies that quantitative work lacks quality. By continually harping on a division between quantitative and qualitative methods, we end up doing more harm than good: we reproduce this detestable division, keep a useless debate artificially alive, and undermine attempts to build bridges across what has become a divide (even if it is an imagined one). This quantitative/qualitative schism has been the incubus of social science for almost 100 years. We can live with it no more.’

Therefore, this section is divided into three subsections – narrative data analysis, coding and interpreting data, counting the countable – instead, each of which is actually a technique being used in the analysis. They are inseparable, overlapping, and iterative but clarified separately to ground the understanding of how the findings in this dissertation are derived.

#### *4.3.1.1 Narrative data analysis*

Narrative analysis could be either an analytical approach itself (Elliott, 2005) or part of content analysis (e.g. Mello, 2002). This research takes the latter aspect as it sees content analysis as a broader approach in which narrative analysis seems to be the first step of a whole process. According to Wertz (2011, p.224), narrative analysis ‘takes as a premise that people live and/or understand their lives in storied forms, connecting events in the manner of a plot that has beginning, middle, and end points’. In other words, it regards ‘narratives’ as ‘unique individual worldviews, perceptions that are negotiated through the act of storytelling itself. ... their meaning is dependent on context, time, place of telling, and audience response, as well as the teller’s viewpoint, coupled with the researcher’s findings (Mello, 2002, p. 234)’. Further, Wertz (2011, p.225) interestingly summarises that narrative analysis ‘aims to explore and conceptualize human experience as it is represented in textual form, ... epistemologically respects the relativity and multiplicity of truth<sup>17</sup>, ... and [focuses on] how events are understood and organised.’

This research embraces three approaches in Mishler’s (1995) framework of narrative analysis which includes: content (actual events and experiences being recounted in narratives), structure (the way in which the story is put together), and performance (interactional and institutional contexts in which narratives are produced, recounted, and consumed) (summarised in Elliot, 2005, p.38). The application of narrative analysis is apparent in Chapter 5 and 6 of this dissertation as both chapters aim to tell a story.

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<sup>17</sup> It should be noted that ‘[N]arrative truth involves a constructed account of experience, not a factual record of what “really” happened. The focus is on how events are understood and organized (Wertz, 2011, p.225).’

#### *4.3.1.2 Coding and interpreting data*

This research brings in coding to the analysis for two reasons: ‘(i) narratives are too long and complex to use in their entirety; and (ii) data can best be understood and controlled when divided up into smaller units of discourse (Mello, 2002, p.235)’. Also, Basit (2003, p. 144) agrees with this view stating that ‘[R]aw data can be very interesting to look at, yet they do not help the reader to understand the social world under scrutiny ... unless such data have been systematically analysed to illuminate an existent situation’. Coding is employed as a key process in this research since it ‘serves to organise the copious notes, transcripts or documents that have been collected and it also represents the first step in the conceptualization of the data (p.218)’ and ‘provides the link between data and the conceptualization (p.5)’ (Bryman & Burgess, 1994).

Despite several classifications of coding being proposed (e.g. Miles & Huberman, 1984; Mason, 1994), this research employs Strauss and Corbin’s (1990) three procedural coding categories: open, axial, and selective. It develops its theory following these three phases of coding. Firstly, ‘open coding’, as ‘the first basic analytical step’, is defined as ‘the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.61)’. Appendix 6 is an example of how this research conducted the open coding. Secondly, ‘axial coding’ is defined as ‘a set of procedures whereby data are put back together in new ways after open coding, by making connections between categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.96). Lastly, selective coding is defined as ‘the process of selecting the core category, systematically relating it to other categories, validating those relationships, and filling in categories that need further refinement and development (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.116)’. Results of these last two phases of coding can be seen in several analyses in Chapter 5 and 6.

Indeed, coding has a crucial role in data analysis as it ‘allow[s] the researcher to communicate and connect with the data to facilitate the comprehension of the emerging phenomena and to generate theory grounded in the data (Basit, 2003, p. 152)’. Still, there are at least three things one should bear in mind when theory



generation entails coding. Firstly, coding ‘involves how you differentiate and combine the data you have retrieved and the reflections you make about this information (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 56)’. Secondly, as a result, research findings are ‘parts of the researcher’s intuitive/cognitive perception and emanate from serious attempts to manipulate, explore, and organise sets of data (Mello, 2002, p.235)’. Thirdly, coding may lead to the ‘danger of diminishing or misinterpreting the nature of the narrative as a whole (Mello, 2002, p.235)’. Consistent with this, Miles and Huberman (1994, p.56-57) suggest that the researcher should be aware that ‘code’ is a choice being made and ‘[T]hat choice excludes other choices that could have been made to "stand for" that word or phrase, and that choice is embedded in a particular logic or a conceptual lens.’ Thus, this research bears these cautions in mind while analysing the data.

#### *4.3.1.3 Counting the countable*

In this research, data analysis is sometimes simply counting. As Silverman (1993, p.163) suggests,

‘...simple counting techniques can offer a means to survey the whole corpus of data ordinarily lost in intensive, qualitative research. Instead of taking the researcher's word for it, the reader has a chance to gain a sense of the flavour of the data as a whole. In turn, researchers are able to test and to revise their generalisations, removing nagging doubts about the accuracy of their impressions about the data.’

Also, as suggested by Lee (1999, p.7), ‘counting the countable’ should undoubtedly be used if the researchers ‘endeavour to describe organisational phenomena.’ According to Miles & Huberman (1994, p.252), there are three good reasons to do so: ‘to see rapidly what you have in a large batch of data; to verify a hunch or hypothesis; and to keep yourself analytically honest, protecting against bias.’ For example, in Chapter 7, to illustrate a brief picture of how authorities are increasingly devolved from the SSO to the SSRO, the researcher counted the number of authorities recently devolved. Another example is when the researcher counts the

number of relations falling on a particular category (e.g. ritualistic/non-ritualistic) to determine the extent to which an actor is characterized (low, moderate, high).

It should be noted, however, that counting is employed not because the researcher ‘is tempted to quantify qualitative data to elucidate events and views (Basit, 2003, p.151)’. Nor does the researcher deny that ‘counting can be as arbitrary as qualitative interpretation of a few fragments of data (Silverman, 1993, p. 165)’. Ultimately, the researcher aims to analyse qualitative data under two strategies: ‘to report results in terms of a relatively simple category scheme’ and ‘to put before the reader by extensive, though necessarily selective, quotation the data themselves, hoping thus that the essential flavour comes through’ (Basit, 2003, p.146).

#### **4.3.2 Positional mappings and situational analysis**

There are two purposes of employing situational analysis in this research. One is to build up a ground of understanding selected social phenomena. In addition to content analysis, situational analysis enables the researcher to ‘draw together studies of discourse and agency, action and structure, image, text and context, history and the present moment – to analyse complex situations of inquiry broadly conceived. Thus it can support researchers from heterogeneous backgrounds pursuing a wide array of projects (Clarke, 2005, p. xxii)’.

Another purpose is to present a simplified picture of selected social phenomena using a positional mapping method. Three methods of situational analysis (situational maps, social world/arena maps, and positional maps) are built upon Strauss’s work (Clarke, 2005). The method being presented several times in this dissertation is positional mapping as it provides a framework to explain a complex system and communicate with readers of the research. According to Clarke (2005, p.126), positional maps are: analytical tools applied to the discursive materials; represent the heterogeneity of actor’s positions; and capture and represent various social settings through the mapping process.

Nonetheless, it should be emphasised that despite the presentation of simplistic diagrams in this dissertation the researcher is aware that the selected phenomenon is

not as simple as it is illustrated. Complexity exists and the researcher explains it in texts corresponding to each diagram. The purpose of diagrams is merely for basic understanding of the research not representation of all findings. As Clarke (2005, p.83) emphasises,

‘...the maps produced using any or all of the strategies laid out here are not necessarily intended as forming final analytic products. ... the major use for them is “opening up” the data and interrogating it in fresh ways within a grounded theory framework. ... Their most important outcome is provoking the researcher to analyse more deeply.’

#### *4.3.2.1 Using diagrams in addition to positional mappings*

Not only positional maps but also other types of diagrams – e.g. pictures, charts – are presented in this dissertation. With careful effort, these visuals are constructed ‘to ensure that diagrams emerge from the data to avoid what Glaser [1998] has called forcing (Buckley & Waring, 2013, p.152)’. Briefly, this dissertation contains a number of diagrams and mappings for two major purposes: analytical purpose and communicative purpose. Precisely, diagrams and positional mappings are of use to visualize thoughts and ideas of this thesis which, afterwards, expectedly facilitate communication with its readers. As Buckley and Waring (2013, pp. 148-149) suggest, diagrams ‘not only serve as visual representations of what is being discovered through analysis but also as generative/analytical techniques and communicative tools (pp.148-49)’.

## **Conclusion**

This research is a multi-site case study. Being aware of a case-study and qualitative research weaknesses, it minimises such weaknesses by using mixed-method triangulation. Data was collected through three methods: documents, interviews and observations. 48 semi-structured interviews in four provinces were conducted and documents were accessed both at the SSO and the SSROs. Unobtrusive observational methods are employed in all interviews and visits in all sites. Two analytical methods – content analysis and situational analysis – were employed. With such research

design, although this research ‘does not permit definitive hypothesis testing, it can point to the limits of existing knowledge while generating propositions that can help guide subsequent research’ (Fossett & Thompson, 2006, p. 375).

In site and case selection, this research employed a purposive sampling technique to select meso-level (region, province) and micro-level (respondent) source of data. The North is selected not only because of research practicality but also because of its distinctive socio-political context. It is one of the poorest and the least populous region in which Thaksin’s electoral heartland lies. Under three criteria (socio-economic characteristics, political nature of the province and data accessibility), four provinces in the North were selected to represent three different socio-economic areas: commercial (Chiang Mai), industrial (Lamphun) and agricultural (Phrae, Nan). Political nature of each province varies but they share a common characteristic – pro-Thaksin. With work experiences in the North, the researcher used her contacts and knowledge to access the required data.



## Chapter 5 : Patterns of Provincial Actors, Relations and Diversity

This chapter presents findings concerning actors and relations in provincial SIBD. It answers two basic questions. Firstly, *‘what are the roles and relations of each policy actor in the delivery system at the provincial level?’* Applying actor-centred analysis, it clarifies actors’ characteristics and relations in social insurance institution at the provincial level (see Section 5.1). Then, resource exchange between provincial actors and the SSROs is analysed to clarify each actor’s influence on SIBD decision-making (see Section 5.2). Secondly, *‘to what extent does diversity exist in SIBD?’* To answer this question, the four systems in the four provinces are thus characterised and the overall differences between them are discussed (see Section 5.3).

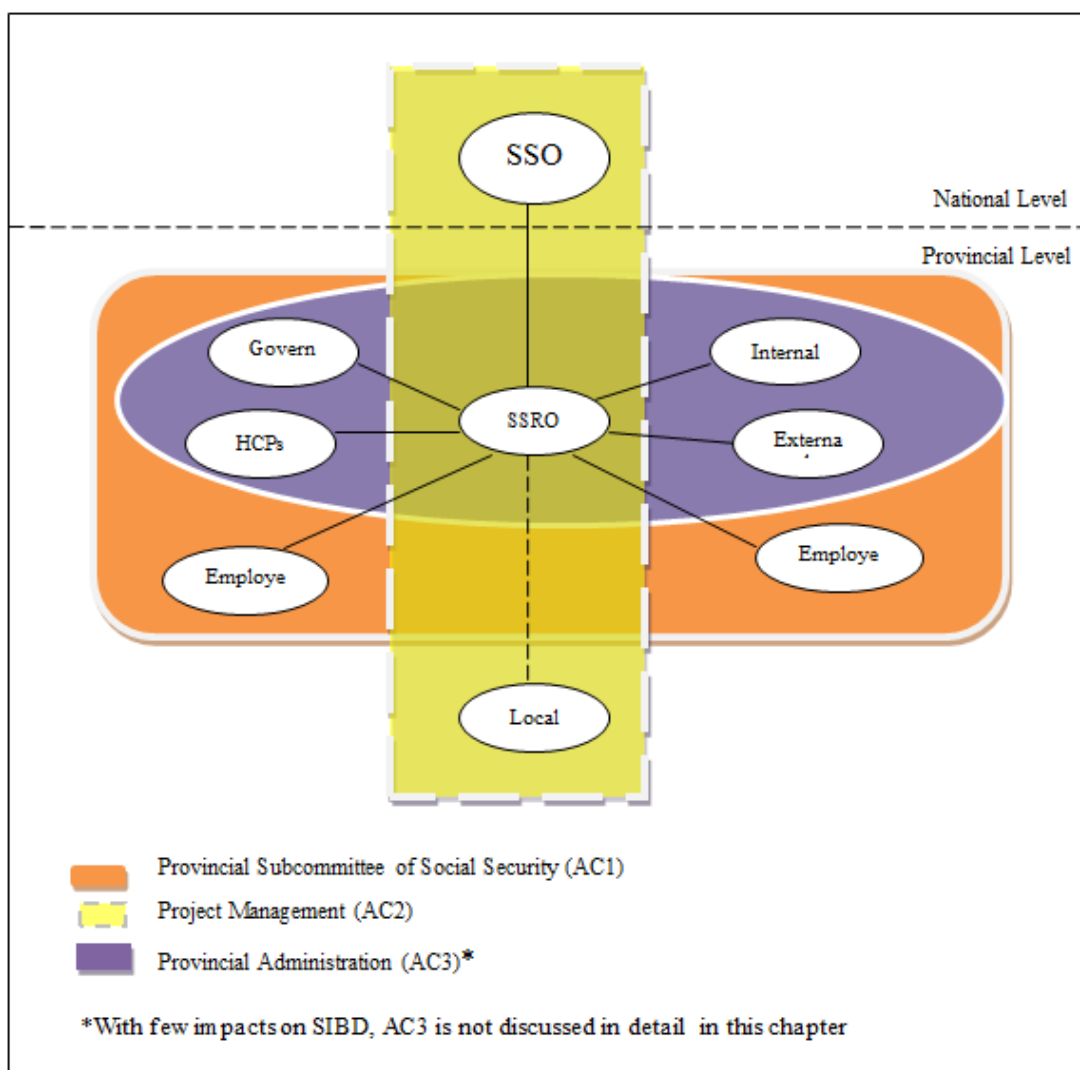
### 5.1 Institutional analysis of SIBD in Thailand

Regarding the framework presented in Chapter 3, actors in provincial SIBD are classified into six types of actors including: the SSRO (delivery agency), the SSO (policy maker), Public Administrative Unit (PAU), employer, employee, and local government (see Figure 3.11). All of these actors perform their roles in at least one of three administrative spheres; while the SSRO stands as a central agency of SIBD in all three spheres (see Figure 5.1). These three administrative spheres are actor constellations (a static picture of actors’ relations) of social insurance institution at the provincial level (see Section 2.3.1) which include: the PSSS administrative sphere (orange zone) as the first actor constellation (AC1); the project management (yellow zone) as the second constellation (AC2); and, the provincial administration (purple zone) as the third constellation (AC3). Essentially, there are three roles of the SSRO in each constellation: a convenor of the PSSS (AC1), a contractor for services (AC2) and an intermediary between various actors (AC3).

AC1 and AC2 are a major focus in this section. Regarding the institutional analysis discussed in Chapter 2, this section analyses social insurance institution particularly AC1 and AC2 in two respects: actor characteristics and actor constellations (see

definitions in Chapter 2). The AC3 is another channel of communication between some actors in SIBD and considering it provides background of provincial SIBD (see Chapter 3). However, this sphere has relatively few impacts on SIBD. Its focus is on provincial policies in general. Decisions directly related to SIBD are rarely made in this sphere. In other words, AC3 is not significant part of SIBD but it is important to our understanding of administration at the provincial level.

Figure 5.1 Actors and relations in provincial SIBD



### 5.1.1 Provincial actors and their characteristics

To investigate actor characteristics in AC1 and AC2, actors are grouped into three – the SSRO (central agency in AC1 and AC2), the tripartite board (in AC1), and project participants (in AC2). Firstly, the SSRO's role as a coordinator of provincial SIBD is discussed. Over the past few decades (1990s-2010s), regulated roles of the SSRO have been changed periodically (see summary of regulations in Appendix 5). However, changes being made were trivial as, for example, the amended version of the regulations remained similar to its preceding versions. Three roles can be summarised from the regulations – SSO's delivery agency, Labour Office (LO)'s supervisee, provincial SIBD coordinator<sup>18</sup>. However, only the first and third roles are of concern in this research. The second role is singled out because it is just the SSRO's obligation to formally report to the LO rather than the role of which affects the decision-making in SIBD. It is a one-way communication where the SSRO reports and the LO acknowledges with few, or no, suggestions.

Further, this section discusses the roles of actors in the tripartite board (AC1) and project management (AC2) in order to clarify actor characteristics (see definition in Section 2.3.1). Firstly, the boundary of the PSSS's administrative sphere (AC1) is derived from functions, responsibilities, and authority of the PSSS in particular (see Chapter 3). This AC1 is important because it is an actor constellation particularly constructed for SIBD decision-making in the province. All PSSS members are appointed by post (by regulation) or selected (politically or apolitically) based on their potential on SIBD. The PSSS is anticipated to be an actor constellation in which actors are willing to contribute to SIBD.

Secondly, the project management (AC2) is also an important administrative sphere because it essentially shows how the diversity of SIBD appears across provinces. Studying it provides the understanding of how actors outside the administrative sphere of social insurance at the provincial level (the PSSS) are involved in SIBD

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<sup>18</sup> As a *coordinator*, the SSRO is to 'coordinate under policies, programmes, and projects concerning duties and responsibilities of the SSO in the province' (MROSSO, 2009); as a *LO's supervisee*, to 'report the monitoring and evaluation under policies, programmes, and projects to the Labour Office' (MROSSO, 2011); and, as a *delivery agency*, to 'operate services under social security law, workmen's compensation law, and other relevant laws' (MROSSO, 2011).



and work with the SSRO. The yellow zone of the project management sphere in Figure 5.1 is encircled by dashed line to note that not all provinces have an initiative project. In other words, not all SSROs provide a service diversified from national norms. Also, this sphere needs not to strictly involve only three actors – SSRO, SSO, local. It is flexible depending on the SSRO's policy; who they would want to work with in their initiative project.

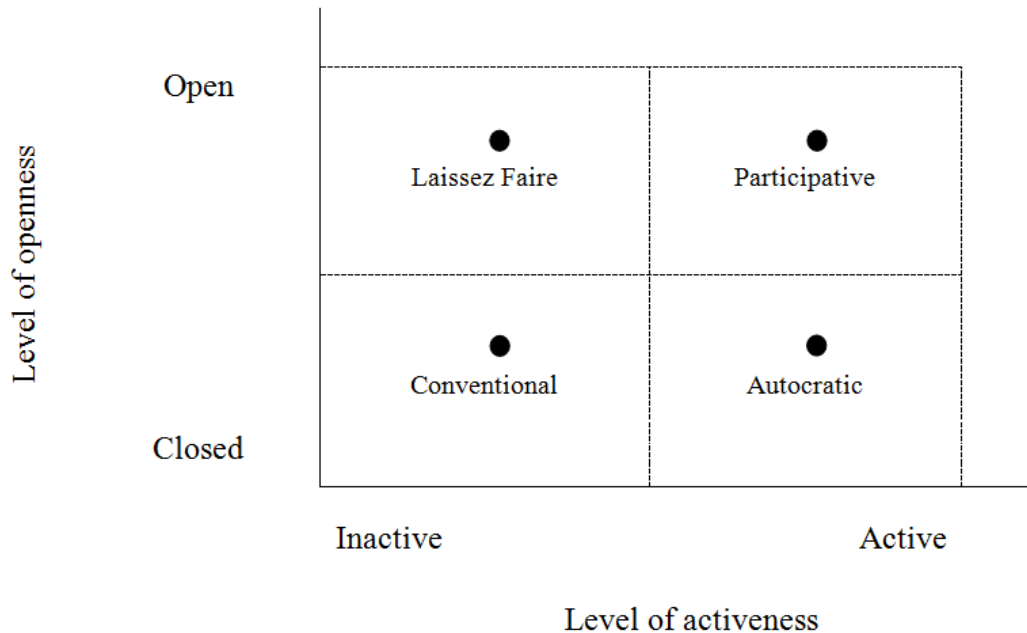
Two issues should be noted before proceeding. Firstly, while all lines represent existing and consistent relationship between the SSRO and other actors, a dashed line linked between the SSRO and local organisations implies that this relation only happens in some provinces. For instance, in Phrae and Nan, the line of SSRO-local relation could be drawn because the project of local cooperation was operated in the provinces. This type of relation is briefly discussed in this section and will be further clarified in Section 5.2. Secondly, at the national level, the SSO is not the only actor involved in Thailand's SIA. For example, the Ministry of Labour (MoL) and the Social Security Committee (SSC; a tri-partite advisory board) are also influential to the SSO's decision making and policy planning. However, as Figure 5.1 exhibits actors and relations in provincial SIBD, neither of them are added to the diagram since they barely have direct interactions with the SSRO. In contrast, the SSO is the national organisation of concern in this research as a direct superordinate of the SSRO. It designs national policies and strategies of SIBD.

#### *5.1.1.1 The SSRO as an organiser of provincial social security*

This section clarifies the SSRO's role as a coordinator in the PSSS administrative sphere (AC1). The SSRO is obliged to be a secretary of the PSSS or, in other words, a coordinator of provincial SIBD. They should organise regular meetings, report their work and progress to the PSSS and gather comments and suggestions from PSSS members. To understand actor characteristics (capabilities, orientations, rationalities), this section applies an analytical framework from organisational behaviour approach to clarify the SSRO's role as a coordinator of provincial SIBD. In line with Lewin's leadership styles (see Miner, 2005), four types of coordinator are proposed: conventional, laissez faire, autocratic, and participative. The

classification of coordinator is proposed (see Figure 5.2) based on two criteria: degree of activeness and degree of openness<sup>19</sup>.

Figure 5.2 Classification of SSRO as a coordinator



In the first criteria, the degree of activeness is identified based on the frequency of the PSSS meeting and the distinctive project operation in the province. If the SSRO organises the meeting regularly, it is considered as active coordinator. Also, if a distinctive project is operated, the SSRO's degree of activeness is increased. Secondly, the SSRO's level of openness is indicated regarding three issues: the PSSS meeting agendas, the SSRO's response to comments, and the SSRO chief's working-style. They are analysed to specify whether the SSRO is agreeable or argumentative. The chief's working style is considered in this analysis because it is suggested that an organisation (the SSRO) is a reflection of its chief. According to the Nan SSRO chief:

‘[This is] bureaucracy. How the chief's face looks like is how the office's face looks like. How the governor's face looks like is how the province's

<sup>19</sup> The openness criteria combines two levels of organisational analysis – individual (SSRO chief), organisational (SSRO performance) – together to summarise the performance of the SSRO. Differently, the activeness criterion only reflects organisational-level activeness.

face looks like. How the Director-General's face looks like is how the department's face looks like.'

Added to this is the statement from the Phrae SSRO chief:

The reflections of bad administration [on the organisation] can be observed in the same way as human body. If it is fresh (*sod-chuen*) inside, outside will be glowing (*pleng-plung*). If the internal core is instable (*ruan-ruan*), the outer will look gloomy (*tuem-tow*). ... One important thing is how the executive reach the goal [of administration]. Some executives arrive and build the team but some may not. They [the latter] may just pay a visit [to insured persons]. This is...depends on...what is it? Dissimilarity of administrative taste.'

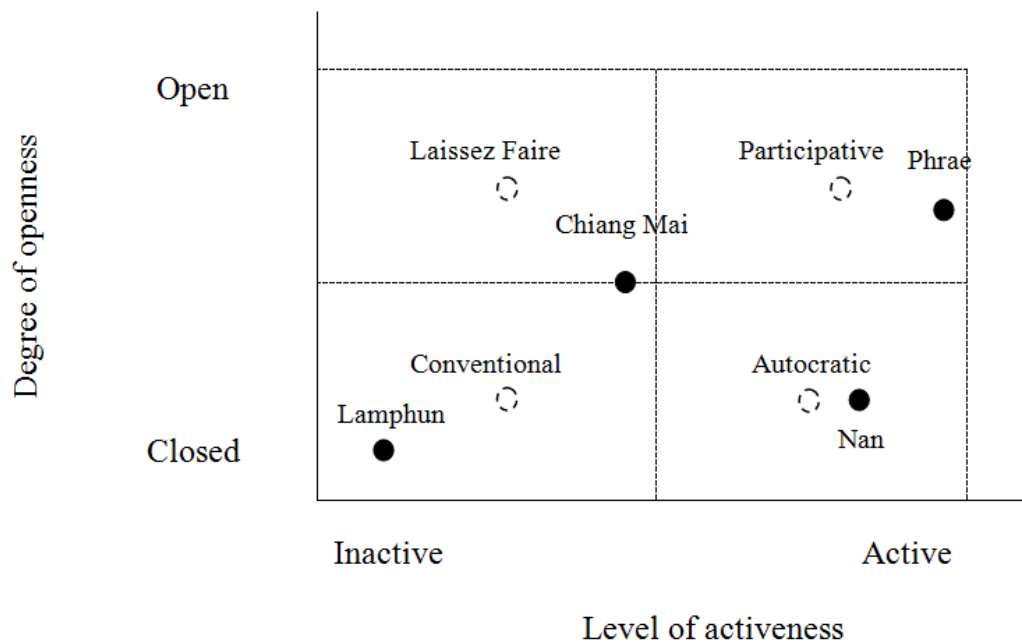
As Boyne and Walker (2010, p. 185) suggest, the managers can 'actually influence and shift in more positive directions' in seeking higher performance. Therefore, to examine the SSRO's degree of openness (open or closed), data from the observations on the chief's characters is analysed in addition to the data from the PSSS minutes and interviews.

All four provinces are hypothetically classified into four different types based on preliminary data analysis. The Phrae SSRO is participative because they seemingly organised the PSSS meeting regularly and was willing to listen to what the PSSS members thought (open). The Nan SSRO, although regularly organised the meeting, tended to stand firmly on their ideas so that they are classified as autocratic type. The Lamphun SSRO is similar to the Nan SSRO in terms of being closed. They appeared not to listen to other actors' comments or suggestions. Unlike the Nan SSRO, they seldom organised the PSSS meeting. Thus, they are labelled as a conventional coordinator. The Chiang Mai SSRO seldom organised the meeting but they appeared to be open and agreeable. They, therefore, are classified into laissez faire type. Nonetheless, the following sections discuss whether these assumptions are verified.

It is found that the hypothesis is verified in three provinces – Phrae, Nan, Lamphun (see Figure 5.4). The Phrae SSRO organised the PSSS meeting regularly (6 times in 2010, see Table 5.1) and was opened to the PSSS members' suggestions. Therefore, they are labelled as participative coordinator. The Nan SSRO, although regularly organising the meeting, had a firm standing point so they are classified into the autocratic type. The Lamphun SSRO appeared not to be open to suggestion and

seldom organised the PSSS meeting (once in 2010 and none in 2009). Thus, they are labelled as conventional PSSS secretary. However, the case of Chiang Mai is different from the hypothesis. Although the Chiang Mai SSRO's level of activeness can be classified into inactive type, their degree of openness falls neither on agreeable nor argumentative. Rather, they seemingly bear another characteristic which is 'diplomatic'.

Figure 5.3 Classification of SSROs as coordinators in selected provinces




Specifically, in terms of openness, the Phrae SSRO appears to be open while the Lamphun and Nan SSROs are closed and the case of Chiang Mai is ambiguous. In terms of activeness, according to minutes of meetings in 2010 the year in which data of four provinces is acquired, the Phrae SSRO is the most active secretary as they organised six meetings in a year (see Table 5.1). The second is the Nan SSRO who organised the meetings twice. In Chiang Mai and Nan, the SSROs similarly organised the meeting only once. Notably, the Nan SSRO appears to be very active in 2006 and 2007 but it is decreased afterwards.

Table 5.1 Frequency of the PSSS meeting and the number of comments in the meeting

Year	Nan		Phrae		Chiang Mai		Lamphun	
	Meeting	Comments	Meeting	Comments	Meeting	Comments	Meeting	Comments
2006	5	4						
2007	4	5						
2008	1	0						
2009	3	6			1**	n/a**	0***	0***
2010	2	0	6*	0*	1**	n/a**	1	4
2011	2	2			2	0		

Source: Nan SSRO (2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011), Phrae SSRO (2010), Chiang Mai SSRO (2011), Lamphun SSRO (2010)

 The grey cell means neither minutes of meeting nor meeting agendas were accessible.

\*The number of meetings and comments is based on the accessible Minutes of Meeting on 23 December 2010.

\*\* The number of comments is not available because the Minutes of Meeting were not accessible.

\*\*\* Suggested by the director of Hariphunchai Memorial Hospital, Lamphun

It should be noted that there are two roles of the SSRO as a coordinator in SIBD: PSSS coordinator and project manager. The above discussion on the coordinator role is limited to the SSRO's function as a PSSS secretary only. The SSRO's role of project manager will be elaborated later in Section 5.3 because it is related to how the SSRO's project is started and, if any, diversified SIBD pattern.

#### 5.1.1.2 Tripartite board (AC1): how does it work?

A provincial tripartite board, namely the PSSS, is supposed to be the most important actor constellation in Thailand's social insurance institution at the provincial level. Its role is legislated by several regulations e.g. the SSA, the regulations of Ministry of Labour. As explained in Chapter 3, the SSC is an advisory tripartite board responsible for the national-level policy-making. Expectedly, the PSSS performs a similar role at the provincial level.

The role of each actor appointed in the PSSS is investigated in two respects: involvement (orientation) and activeness (rationally-bounded action). Firstly, an actor could be involved as either incumbent or non-incumbent member of the PSSS (see Section 3.2.4). While being incumbent simply means get involved by posit and

is restricted to government organisations (i.e. PAUs, governor, HCPs); being non-incumbent is far more complicated. This kind of involvement usually occurs to employer and employee representatives and external organisations. Non-incumbent members could be government organisations (Attorney Office in Phrae, Local Administrative Office in Nan) or private hospitals (Hariphunchai Memorial Hospital in Lamphun, McCormick Hospital in Chiang Mai). It is unclear, however, who exactly nominated and selected the prospects.

Secondly, activeness regards to the actor's participation in and out of the PSSS meetings. In the meeting, each actor's comment(s) recorded in the minutes is counted. The more comments they give; the more active they are. Out of the meeting, interview data is analysed regarding the answer of whether they have ever given comments or suggestions to the SSRO in some other occasions. Ideally, all 46 interviewed provincial actors should be discussed one by one. However, this section will not go to that extensive detail but rather provides a summary of the data.

To consider activeness further, the PSSS members are categorised into three groups: government organisations, representative of employer and employee, and external office. Firstly, government organisation includes provincial offices, health care providers (HCPs), the governor, and external PAUs. Provincial offices, or Public Administrative Units (PAUs), include either four internal offices (offices under control of the MoL: LO, EO, LWPO, LSDC) and the HCPs. The HCPs including the Public Health Office (PHO) and the provincial hospital (PH) are discussed separately because, although both are also PAUs, their major role as health care provider makes them different from other actors in SIBD. Distinctively, the governor plays two important roles in the provincial SIBD: a province head and the PSSS chair (see Section 3.3.2). Theoretically, as a provincial leader, the governor's responsibilities are to direct and coordinate all PAUs in the province.

Regarding the MoL's suggestion on PSSS Appointment (see Appendix 8), there are two major responsibilities of the PSSS. One is to consider cases of disabled benefit claimants; another is to be an advisory board for the SSRO. Apparently in the minutes of meeting, it is found that the PSSS had been working very well regarding

the first responsibility. However, in the second role, most of interviewees agreed with the assertion that ‘the PSSS is just a rubber stamp’. In overall, most PAUs, both internal and external offices, thought ‘the SSRO is authorised to SIBD’ (see Table 5.2) so that they should not intervene in the SSRO’s decisions. There are a few PAUs responded differently such as the Nan LAO, the Chiang Mai governor, and the Lamphun governor. They contended that being a PSSS member one could express their opinions and contribute to SIBD. The LAO Chief denied the assertion stating that the PSSS is an open stage for the subcommittee to discuss. It is not a rubber stamp unless someone would behave like that. Both governors insisted that this subcommittee was like other committees in the province and all participants were encouraged to share their thoughts so obviously it is not a rubber stamp.


Table 5.2 Opinion of PAUs towards the SSRO's legitimacy in SIBD

Actors	Phrae	Nan	Chiang Mai	Lamphun
Governor	O	O	X	X
Labour Office	O	O	O	n/a
Employment Office	O	O	O	O
Labour Welfare and Protection Office	O	O	O	O
Labour Skill Development Centre	O	O	O	O
Public Health Office	O	O	n/a	O
Provincial Hospital	n/a	O	O	O
Attorney Office	O			
Local Administration Office		X		

O = The SSRO is authorised to SIBD so that we do not need to intervene.

X = We do have the rights to suggest the SSRO although SIBD is the SSRO’s jobs.

n/a = Interview permission is not given.

 The actor does not involve in the province.

According to the interviews, the mentor role was evidently not performed well by most of the PSSS members. Considering government organisations, most internal offices stated that they did not object any of the SSRO’s ideas because they believed that the SSRO was doing their jobs and following all regulations. Therefore, they rarely gave comments or suggestion in the PSSS meeting. Slightly differently, external offices in three provinces – Chiang Mai, Phrae, Nan – appointed in the PSSS reasoned their specialization as their quality for being chosen. Interestingly, they

were rarely active in the PSSS meeting. The low activeness of government organisations could be quantified based on the minutes of meeting available from the fieldwork. Using quantitative content analysis, every comment, suggestion, or question from the PSSS members remarked in minutes of meetings is counted as participative action. The result is, according to the accessible minutes of 21 PSSS meetings in the four provinces, only 16 comments were recorded (see Table 5.3). Particularly, public organisations in Phrae and Chiang Mai gave no comments at all. In Nan, 14 comments were noted down in 12 minutes of meetings but most of them were not directly related to SIBD.

Table 5.3 Number of government organisations' comments in the PSSS meetings

Province	Actors	Number of comments
Phrae	-	-
Nan	1. PHO chief	2 comments
	2. LO Chief	3 clarifications, 2 comments
	3. EO chief	1 comment
	4. PH director	3 comments
	5. Governor	3 suggestion
Chiang Mai	-	-
Lamphun	1. External office	2 suggestions

Source: Nan SSRO (2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011), Phrae SSRO (2010), Chiang Mai SSRO (2011), Lamphun SSRO (2010)

Secondly, representatives of both employer and employee organisations are selected from the nomination which varies across provinces. Their roles could be analysed in two regards: the PSSS's official responsibilities (see Chapter 3) and their theoretical motives to participate in the tripartite board. For instance, are they representing employers and employees? Or, are they just involved for political reason and become inactive actors? As Knudsen (1995, p. 16) suggests, employees and employers involved in industrial relations expect influence and higher efficiency. Accordingly, it is hypothesised that employer and employee representative will participate in attempt to influence the decision-making in SIBD. While employees anticipate 'gains from influence e.g. work satisfaction, better working conditions'; employers seek 'absence of conflict, employee motivation and commitment to company goals'



(Knudsen, 1995, p.16). Although ‘participation [of employers and employees in social insurance administration] must be a battlefield rather than a field of cooperation (Knudsen, 1995, p. 16)’; such battle could positively be perceived as a pursuit of better SIBD.

Activeness of employers and employees as PSSS members is rare. Only four comments were recorded in 21 PSSS meetings of four selected provinces. Also, all interviewed employees noted that they attempted to be participative in the meeting. However, only two comments of the Lamphun employee representative were recorded. He suggested to the SSRO communication channel with employees and registration of insured persons (Minutes, 22 November 2010, Lamphun SSRO). Similarly, employers are rarely active. Only two comments of the Nan employer representative were recorded during the discussion on the government’s populist policy in 2009. Added to this, interviews with two employers, one in Lamphun and one in Chiang Mai, suggest that both employers likely disregard their roles in SIBD. In conclusion, employees wanted to participate more but they did not, or could not, know how or what they could do. Employer seemingly got involved in the PSSS just because their friends (*phak puak*) advised them that the post would benefit them somehow.

Lastly, by regulation, external offices are selected by the SSRO in the light of the office’s duty in relation to SIBD (see Section 3.2.4). In Phrae and Nan, PAUs are appointed into the PSSS. They basically shared the same opinion as other PAUs in the PSSS. In Lamphun and Chiang Mai, private hospitals are selected for the reason that they are HCPs. Lamphun Hariphunchai Hospital was recommended by a national politician; Chiang Mai McCormick Hospital was selected by the Chiang Mai SSRO. Being HCPs, they provide healthcare similar to public hospitals but, being profit-oriented, they may have different perspective or practice. In their interviews, both of them claimed that they were willing to participate in SIBD more but they did not have the chance or the SSRO had just not listened to them.

The Hariphunchai Hospital Director said there were few occasions for all PSSS members to participate in SIBD more. The McCormick Hospital Director felt

reluctant to suggest the SSRO something since the SSRO seemingly assumed their suggestion would have been profit-oriented. However, he stated that the hospital work for patients not profits as it was funded by a non-profit organisation, the McCormick Foundation. To conclude, the activeness of external offices greatly varies. The external PAUs are rarely active similar to other government organisations. In a slightly different way, the external private organisations attempted to be more involved. However, similar to the representatives, it is quite difficult to find their way to get their voice heard by the SSRO.

In overall, the performance of PSSS reflects how bureaucratized SIBD is. In all four provinces, it is found that the PSSS is likely a rubber stamp (*tra yaang*). This implies that the subcommittee's work is basically to approve the SSRO's decisions. In Chiang Mai and Lamphun, meetings of subcommittee were less regular than in Phrae and Nan. Although rare, the meetings were only about approving benefits for disabled and not much about discussion on service provision. In Phrae, despite regular meetings, the PSSS activeness is found to be few. Exceptionally, Nan is the case where the PSSS appears to be relatively active.

#### *5.1.1.3 Project Management (AC2) and the SSRO as a contractor of service delivery*

Project management (AC2) is an actor constellation characterized by rules mutually agreed between the SSRO and project participants and only exists in some provinces. Project participants are local governments, sub-provincial hospitals, and local mitigation centre. In this section, the term 'local organisations' includes sub-provincial organisations which politically responsible for particular sub-district area (local governments or local mitigation centres) or working closely to service recipients (district-level or community hospital). The roles of these organisations in SIBD are not officially designated nationwide. Although the SSO's policy guidelines stated that local network should be built, searching through the SSO's documents or royal decrees no evidence of obligation for the SSRO to involve local organisations in SIBD is found. Their roles are suggested by the SSROs who are the manager of local cooperation projects. Employing the same framework in Section 5.3, project

participants are discussed in two respects: involvement and activeness. Firstly, their involvement is voluntary as they can choose whether to join the project. Therefore, the analysis focuses more on who made the decision to join. Secondly, their degree of activeness is analysed based on the question of what they had done as a project participant and how often they cooperated with the SSRO in the interviews.

Local organisations did not have a chance to participate in the PSSS meeting since they are not qualified to be appointed as the PSSS. To investigate their activeness in SIBD, the evidence is based on interviews with them and documents related to cooperation projects. Evidence suggests that local organisations performed a role as the SSRO's subordinate organisations rather than networking service providers. They waited for the SSRO's order rather than proactively engaged in SIBD. In Phare, two selected interviewees similarly stated that they only participated in seminars and training organised by the SSRO. In Nan, the interviewee stated that she, as a local coordinator, would provide the information or forms only when insured persons came to her. This occasion, however, rarely occurred. Particularly, since the Nan SSRO came to her office to provide the service themselves, service recipients tended to come on Tuesdays. Also, if they came the other day, she would suggest them to come on Tuesday instead. Thus, it is evident to conclude that local organisations were not active and participative in SIBD.

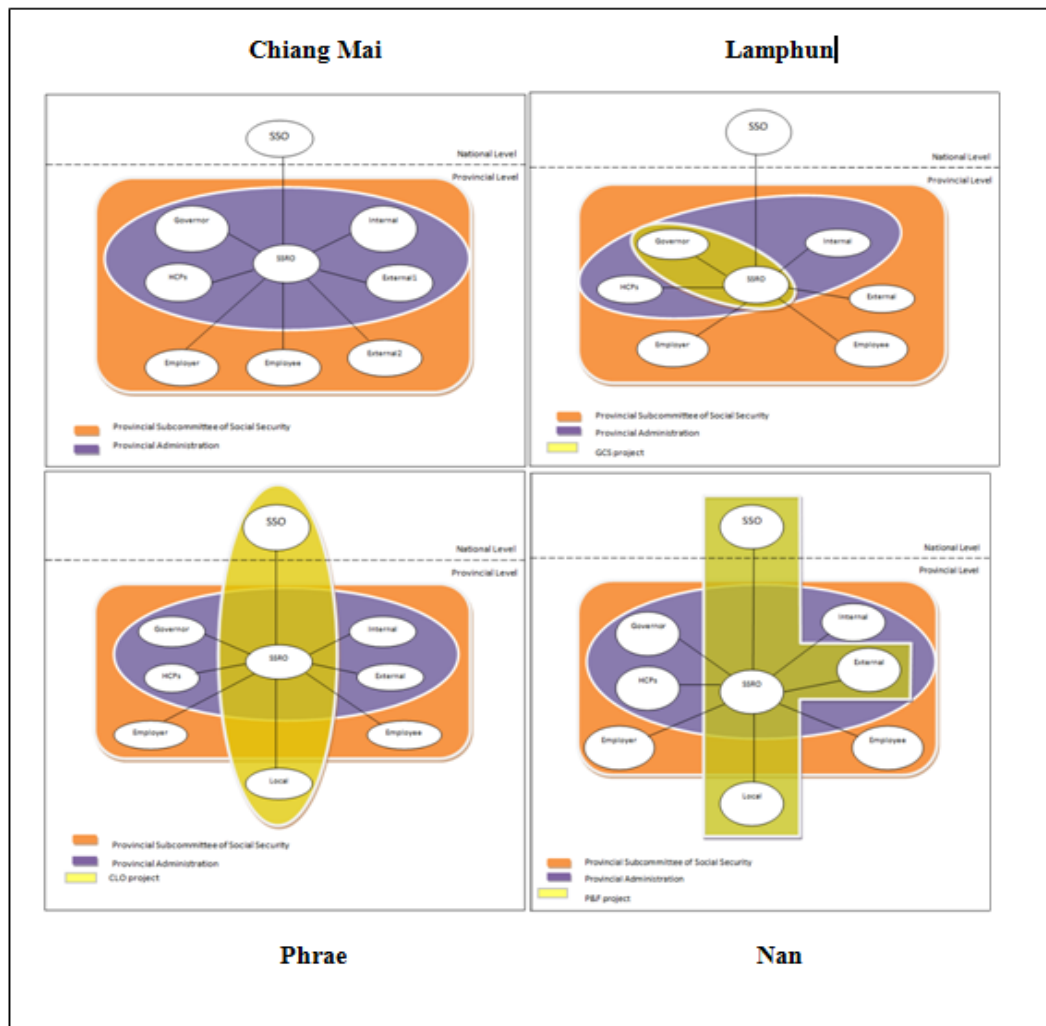
There seem to be only one reason why local organisations did not participate more. They thought the responsibilities given by the SSRO were some sort of burden. As decentralisation was being implemented, more and more authorities and responsibilities were transferred from central to local governments. As one of them said, 'sometimes we were just busy so that we sent anybody, whoever available at the time, to the SSRO's training'. However, the Nan LAO disagreed with this. He stated that as long as it was a matter of serving public local governments should be ready to engage. Also, as the Baan Lao SAO in Phrae stated, the cooperation with the SSRO helped their local insured persons. Therefore, this reason cannot be generalized for all local governments.

### 5.1.2 Social insurance institution in action

Social insurance institutions (see definition in Section 2.1.1) at the provincial level comprise three actor constellations including: provincial SIA (AC1), project management (AC2), and ProA (AC3). Only two constellations (AC1, AC2) are significant to the institution and discussed in Section 5.1.1. This section illustrates the pattern of SIBD in each province and show the variation of SIBD across the four provinces (see Figure 5.4). Comparatively, Nan seems to be the province in which local governments and the external office were actively engaged in SIBD. This leads to the most diversified pattern of SIBD compared to other three provinces. The second most diversified is Phrae where local cooperation also happened. However, differently from Nan, it was limited to only two actors in the province (the SSRO and local organisations). Thirdly, the Lamphun SSRO participated in the GCS project which slightly diversified the SIBD pattern. In Chiang Mai, the SSRO basically did routine work and no evidence of local cooperation exists.

Regarding the regulations, the PSSS (AC1) is the most important sphere for decision-making of SIBD where the governor is a facilitator of each meeting while the real leader is the SSRO. Actors involved in this tripartite board either voluntarily or obligatorily are required to play a mentor role for the SSRO. However, in reality, the meetings are an information sharing and bureaucratic approval process rather than a stage of negotiations or discussions. Although some members such as the employee representative or the hospital representative attempted to suggest to the SSRO the improvement of their services, this would be noted down in minutes of meetings but rarely operationalised. In brief, this sphere seems not to be working as expected. While a few PSSS members are active; none of them are, or can be, influential on SIBD.

Figure 5.4 Comparison of SIBD pattern across selected provinces



In project management (AC2), actors are involved by the SSRO's selection and perform their roles regarding the project agreement such as the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the SSRO and the actors. This exemplifies how the provincial delivery pattern is diversified from the uniform pattern of SIBD. For example, the CLO project appears in Phrae where local organisations were directly cooperated – signed the MoU – with the SSRO. Also, the P&F in Nan cooperated with not only local governments but also the LAO, an external office. In this arena, the SSO is involved in the project approval, while local organisations play a role as service providers.

In contrast to SIBD diversity, similarity of SIBD patterns across provinces exists in the PSSS members' low level of activeness. Several reasons were given i.e. respect to the SSRO, no interest in SIBD, lack of chances, and the SSRO's misperception of their organisational goal. The activeness of local organisations in SIBD is also low. In principle, they are supposed to work as partners of the SSRO in SIBD network. In practice, no evidence shows that they are equal in the hierarchy of provincial SIBD. Rather, they technically put themselves as the SSRO's operatives following orders only. Due to the limited chance and interest, as they claimed, local organisations took part only if the activities were of their interest. For example, they were cooperating with the SSRO for the sake of their employees (in Phrae) and the order of higher-level organisation (the LAO in Nan). Contrarily, the reason of being inactive is that they needed to pay more attention to their core function rather than SIBD.

This section concludes that social insurance institutions at the provincial level play a trivial role in SIBD. Table 5.4 summarises the discussions in Section 5.1.1 emphasising two key issues (involvement, activeness) of provincial actors' roles in SIBD. In terms of provincial actor's involvement, there are two possibilities that actors are directly involved in SIBD: being a PSSS member or participating in the SSRO's local cooperation project. Firstly, regarding PSSS appointment, the SSRO is responsible for selecting a specific number of actors regarding the number of insured persons. While some PSSS members are incumbents (PAUs, HCPs, governor), the others are non-incumbent (representatives, external offices). Secondly, the SSRO's local cooperation projects enabled local organisations to be part of SIBD as happened in Nan and Phrae. They were involved either voluntarily (decisions made by local leaders) or compulsory (decisions made by the LAO).

Table 5.4 Provincial actors' roles in SIBD

		Tripartite board (PSSS)						Project participants (Local governments)
		Government organisation		Representative		External office		
		PAU**	Governor	Employer	Employee	PAU	Private hospital	
Administrative arena*	PSSS	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
	Provincial Admin	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes/No	No	No
	Local Cooperation Project	No	Yes/No	No	No	Yes/No	No	Yes
Involvement	Involving reason	Obligation	Obligation	Social status	- Social status - Being asked by the national employee organisation	Being asked/ convinced by the SSRO	- Being asked by the SSRO/ politician	- The sake of organisation's employees (Phrae) - Order from the LAO (Nan)
	Nominated by	-	-	Group of friends ( <i>Phak Phuak</i> )	- <i>Phak Phuak</i> - The national employee organisation	The SSRO	- The SSRO (Chiang Mai) - National politician (Lamphun)	- The SSRO (Phrae) - The LAO (Nan)
Activeness	Activeness	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low/Moderate	Low	Low
	Inactivity reason	It's their [the SSRO's] business. [Not my business]	n/a	No interest in social insurance	Lack of chances or information	It's their [the SSRO's] business. [Not my business]	- The SSRO's misperception on the hospital (CM) - Lack of chances (Lamphun)	Burden
Influence***		Low	Low	Low	Low	Low/Moderate	Low	Moderate

\* Does the actor exist in any administrative arena? ('yes/no' means the case varies across provinces)

\*\* PAUs here include internal offices and the HCPs

\*\*\* Assumption being set for further discussion in Chapter 6

Regardless of their involvement, provincial actors are rarely active in SIBD. As an advisory board, the PSSS are supposed to advise the SSRO. However, in reality, they rarely made suggestions to the SSRO on their activities or decisions. Being either incumbent or non-incumbent, they shared the same reason of being inactive in SIBD. Internal offices, the HCPs, and the governor (incumbent members) are obliged to be part of the PSSS; while external offices (non-incumbent members) are selected by the SSRO. However, what they said in their interviews similarly connoted ‘SIBD is the SSRO’s business, not my business’. Besides, as project participants, local organisations play insignificant roles in SIBD. Some perceived SIBD as a burden; while some did not. However, no evidence shows that local organisations are active in SIBD.

Purposively, this section focuses on provincial actors’ roles and their performance in SIBD and left the inter-organisational relations untouched. However, the activeness of provincial actors suggests the hypothesis of their influence over SIBD (see the last row in Table 5.4). Simply speaking, it is hypothesised that being active could result in being influential. This will be examined in the next section.

### **5.1.3 Resource dependence within SIBD**

It is necessary to understand which actor is influential on SIBD or precisely the SSRO’s decision-making. This could be viewed through resource-based analysis. As Provan (1984, p. 499) states, ‘...[resource] dependence results in influence...because dependence is a measure of potential power and influence over decisions refers to enacted power’. Also, as Purdy (2012) suggests, ‘[R]esource-based power recognizes the dependencies among organisations involved in collaboration and their ability to deploy resources (p.410)’. To do so, Aldrich (1971, p. 285) proposes an analytical framework of power-control in inter-organisational relations under two criteria: control over entry and member control over participation. However, although this framework clarifies each organisation’s conditions of participation in resource exchange fields, it only emphasises an organisation’s power over the other in entry or participation not the decision-making.



This research this develops a framework to analyse resource exchange on the bases of mutuality and expectation. This analytical framework of resource exchanges within dyadic inter-organisational relations is applied to data collected from four selected provinces. Each organisation (namely Organisation B) is classified into six actor types: internal office, province head, HCP, external office, representative, and local organisation. These are developed from four types of actor (government organisation, representative, external office, project participant) in Chapter 5 (see Table 5.4). Specifically, government organisations are further classified into three types of actor including internal office, province head (governor), and the HCP. Also, project participants are referred to as local organisations in this chapter.

Six types of resources (discussed in Section 2.5.2) are specified in column (a) and (b) of Figure 6.3. Column (a) presents the resources being transferred from an organisation B to the SSRO (B → SSRO). Similarly, column (b) presents the resources being transferred from the SSRO to the organisation (SSRO → B). Both columns are divided into three sub-columns including: 'Mandated', 'Expected', and 'Actual'. This approach allows resources of different kinds to be related in a qualitative research design and it is not an attempt to put figures on actual money transferred. 'Mandated' means resources which are specified in regulations, policies, or agreements as required resources to be transferred. 'Expected' means resources of which one actor expected from the other. 'Actual' means resources being transferred through the relationship in reality. All dyadic relations are analysed regarding this framework (see Appendix 6). To be clear, this analysis employs coding method and 'counting the countable' approach. As shown in the example, three sets of data (interviews, minutes of meeting, official documents) are analysed and categorised into six coding categories of resource (initial or open coding).

Figure 5.5 Analytical framework for resource exchange

Actor type	Organization	(a) Resources to SSRO (Actor → SSRO)			(b) SSRO's return resource (SSRO → Actor)		
		Mandated	Expected	Actual	Mandated	Expected	Actual
Internal/ Governor/ HCP/ External/ Reps/ Local	B	I/S1/S2/E/ A/M	I/S1/S2/E /A/M	I/S1/S2/E /A/M	I/S1/S2/E/A /M	I/S1/S2/E/ A/M	I/S1/S2/E /A/M

Resources: I = Information, S1 = staff, S2 = service, E = expertise, A = authority, M = material

For example, the analysis of resource exchange between the Nan SSRO and the LAO is shown in Figure 5.6. From the LAO to the SSRO, three resources (information, expertise, authority) are mandated by the SSO's Guideline of PSSS and the P&F MoU. According to the Guideline (SSO's Order No.79/2552), the LAO as a member of the Nan PSSS is required '...to provide suggestions to the SSRO's strategy and operation and advises on problem solutions'. Also, according to the P&F MoU (Nan SSRO, 2008), '[B]oth parties [the SSRO and the LAO] agree to support and promote information service of social insurance which will promote quality of life in each administrative territory [of local government]'. These two regulations suggest that the LAO contribute their information, expertise, and authority to SIBD.

Figure 5.6 Example of Resource exchange analysis

Actor	Org.	Resource to SSRO			SSRO's return resources		
		Mandated	Expected	Actual	Mandated	Expected	Actual
External office	LAO	(3) Info Expertise Authority	(1) Authority	(1) Authority	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info

Contrarily, the SSRO only expected to receive the LAO's authority. As the Nan SSRO chief (interview, 17 October 2011) suggests that:

'The LAO is a regional office coordinating between central and local governments. This is semi-commanding (*Kueng bangkub buncha*). The LAO cannot command [local governments] but they can coordinate [with

them] for us. They can discuss and have authority. If they [local governments] want to get their plan approved, it seems they [local governments and the LAO] rely on each other.’

Working with the LAO in the P&F, the SSRO actually received the LAO’s authority only. From the SSRO to the LAO, it is mandated in the SSO’s Guideline of PSSS that the SSRO should provide information to all members of the PSSS including the LAO. Technically, the LAO received information from the SSRO (see the Nan PSSS Minutes of Meeting). The LAO in fact expected nothing from the SSRO as the LAO chief states that (interview, 1 December 2011):

‘We just help [the SSRO]. This [P&F] project is good for service recipients. There is no reason not to do it.’

There are three assumptions in considering each resource type within the actor’s influence. One is that information is considered as ‘basic commodities in inter-organisational transactions (Shrum, 1990, p. 497)’ and thus information exchange is less influential than exchanges of other resource types. Secondly, financial resource is essential in inter-organisational relations and thus the financial resource owner is influential in resource exchange. According to Purdy (2012), ‘while information and knowledge resources are needed to comprehend and analyse the issues. Financial resources can allow organisations to gain expert advice or representation in collaborative processes, increasing their influence (p.411)’. Lastly, it is difficult to give values to the other resources (staff, service, material, authority, expertise). An assumption is thus set as: ‘the more varied types of resource are exchanged in the relation, the more influential the relation is to SIBD’.

Provincial actors are mostly influential on SIBD at low level. Specifically, three relationships - SSRO-internal, SSRO-HCP, SSRO-representative - are slightly influential on SIBD. Firstly, resources being exchanged in the SSRO-internal and the SSRO-representatives relations are information only. These relations are highly ritualistic and moderately entail trust. Secondly, the SSRO-HCP exchange may look different from the other two relations at the first glance as it is slightly ritualistic and entails moderate level of trust. Indeed, the HCPs as direct service providers could possibly provide the SSRO medical services for insured persons and medical

knowledge in addition to information. However, it turns out that the SSRO-HCP exchange is just an information-sharing. This thus makes the SSRO-HCP relation slightly influential on SIBD, similar to SSRO-internal and SSRO-representative exchanges.

Three relations – SSRO-governor, SSRO-external, SSRO-local – are more influential on SIBD. Firstly, the SSRO-governor relationship is moderately influential on SIBD. Resources exchanged between both parties – finance, service – are substantial to their operations. If one would want to process particular activities, the other's cooperation is crucial. Secondly, the SSRO-local relationship is highly influential to SIBD. Consistent with the conclusion in Section 5.1.2, this relation is highly ritualistic since local organisations expected nothing from the SSRO and put few efforts in the project in cooperation with the SSRO. However, their resources (service, staff, material) are crucial for initiatives. If local organisations do not cooperate, the project could not be settled and SIBD will not be diversified. Lastly, the SSRO-external relationship is the most difficult to conclude because the SSRO's interaction with the external office varies across provinces. For instance, Chiang Mai, Lamphun, and Phrae are where the SSRO-external plays a trivial role in SIBD. However, in Nan, the LAO as a selected external office played an important role as a coordinator between the SSRO and local organisations.

To conclude, it is interesting to revisit the assumptions set in Section 5.1.2 and re-examine the influence of provincial actors towards SIBD. Concordantly, three actors (internal offices, HCPs, representatives) are proved to be slightly influential to SIBD; the governor is moderately influential; external office is variably influential. However, local organisation's level of influence is slightly different from Section 5.1.2 assumptions. While it is assumed that the actor would have been moderately influential, evidence in this chapter proves that local organisation is highly influential to SIBD.

## **5.2 Inter-organisational relations and collaboration**

It is not easy to measure the degree of collaboration as well as to find a particular framework for such measurement. Mostly, existing literature deals with the conceptualization of collaboration (e.g. Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2012; Huxham, 2003) but none deals directly with its measurement. As McGuire (2006, p. 40) suggests, studies of collaboration have been focused on three aspects including: collaborative management/governance, necessary skill sets in collaboration and effect of collaboration on programme outcomes. Developed from relevant literature, therefore, this section draws the measurement of collaboration degree upon two components of collaboration: relationship patterns, collaborative activities. Firstly, ‘relationship pattern’ refers to the form of relationship formation i.e. the two organisations are obligatorily or voluntarily involved in the relation (see Section 2.5). Secondly, ‘collaborative activity’ refers to an activity in which two actors purposively involved with each other (see Section 2.4).

### **5.2.1 Relationship patterns: contracting, cooperating, coordinating or collaborating?**

In Section 2.5, two dimensions of inter-organisational relations (obligatory, voluntary) are proposed as an analytical framework. As this research focuses on dyadic relations, it is thus important to consider possibilities of interrelations between the two actors. Two relationship patterns are stressed in Agranoff and McGuire (2003) as they indicate that one should not confuse collaboration with cooperation. However, the interrelation of organisation exists in more forms as Axelsson and Axelsson (2006) suggest four categories of inter-organisational relation i.e. co-ordination, co-operation, contracting, and collaboration. They consider the relations under two dimensions (vertical, horizontal) implicitly suggesting linear views of the relations.

However, it is questionable whether this would confuse an analysis of relationship pattern with the power between two actors as, for example, vertical relation inevitably means the relation between two organisations from different levels. In

other words, one organisation is superior over the other. Therefore, acknowledging such vertical/horizontal dichotomy, this section uses the terms suggested by Axelsson and Axelsson (2006) but looking at inter-organisational relations from a different angle. As collaboration involves not only two or more organisations but also mutual agreement (see Mandell, 1999), this research takes such mutuality as a platform to analyse relationship patterns within collaboration.

Developed from these frameworks, Figure 5.12 presents four possible relationship patterns (I – IV) for two organisations interacting in a particular field. Each dimension in the figure depicts two choices of an organisation. An ‘obligatory’ pattern occurs when an organisation has no control over participation in the field as it is under rules or functions. A ‘voluntary’ pattern occurs when an organisation can choose to participate in the exchange field. It should be noted that this framework is drawn under two assumptions. Firstly, in a particular exchange field, an organisation (A) is a focal organisation while the other (B) is participating in response to A’s request. Secondly, in order to do their job, A is in need of resources from B. Also, throughout this dissertation, organisation A always refers to the SSRO while organisation B is a provincial actor in SIBD listed in Chapter 5.

Figure 5.7 Possibilities of dyadic relationship patterns

		Organization A	
		Obligatory	Voluntary
Organization B	Obligatory	I Contracting	II Co-ordination
	Voluntary	III Co-operation	IV Collaboration

Source: adapted from Axelsson and Axelsson (2006)

Each pattern is labelled using the terms borrowing from Axelsson and Axelsson’s (2006) work mentioned earlier. However, each term is defined slightly different in this research. Contracting (Pattern I) occurs when both parties are obliged to cooperate in the field. Co-ordination (Pattern II) occurs when A would like to do

something out of their functions or routine jobs and put a request on B whose major function is related to the job and cannot deny taking part. Co-operation (Pattern III) occurs when A is obliged to operate their function; B has needed resources but does not need not to join unless they want to. Lastly, Collaboration (Pattern IV) occurs when both parties are not obliged to cooperate but as A wants to do the job they request B to join. B has the resources and they could voluntarily join the operation.

Also, Axelsson and Axelsson (2006) suggest that contracting (low vertical and horizontal integration) is the least collaborative pattern of relationship while collaboration (high horizontal and low vertical) is the most collaborative. Similarly, although this research looks at the relations from mutual-agreement perspective, contracting is considered to be the least collaborative relation while collaboration is the opposite. Further, the determination of the degree of collaboration in this section is not for each relation but for the case selected. Therefore, the hypothesis is set to be as below:

‘The more contracting pattern exists in the province, the less degree of collaboration. Contrarily, the more collaboration pattern exists in the province, the higher degree of collaboration.’

Table 5.5 Interprovincial comparison of actor's involvement and relationship patterns

Actor	Organisation	Chiang Mai		Lamphun		Phrae		Nan	
		Involvement (SSRO/Org. B)	Relationship pattern	Involvement (SSRO/Org. B)	Relationship pattern	Involvement (SSRO/Org. B)	Relationship pattern	Involvement (SSRO/Org. B)	Relationship pattern
Internal office	EO	O/O	Contracting	O/O	Contracting	O/O	Contracting	O/O	Contracting
	LO	O/O	Contracting	O/O	Contracting	O/O	Contracting	O/O	Contracting
	LWPO	O/O	Contracting	O/O	Contracting	O/O	Contracting	O/O	Contracting
	LSDC	O/O	Contracting	O/O	Contracting	O/O	Contracting	O/O	Contracting
Province head	GO	O/O	Contracting	O/O V/O	Contracting Coordination	O/O	Contracting	O/O	Contracting
HCP	PHO	O/O	Contracting	O/O	Contracting	O/O	Contracting	O/O	Contracting
	PH	O/O	Contracting	O/O	Contracting	O/O	Contracting	O/O	Contracting
External office	Ext1	O/V	Cooperation	O/V	Cooperation	O/V	Cooperation	O/V V/V	Cooperation <b>Collaboration</b>
	Ext2	O/V	Cooperation						
Representative	EmE1	O/V	Cooperation	O/V	Cooperation	O/V	Cooperation	O/V	Cooperation
	EmE2	O/V	Cooperation						
	EmR1	O/V	Cooperation	O/V	Cooperation	O/V	Cooperation	O/V	Cooperation
	EmR2	O/V	Cooperation						
Local organisation	Local government					<b>V/V</b>	<b>Collaboration</b>	V/IO	??

O = Obligatory; V = Voluntary; IO = Indirect Obligatory



In Section 5.1, it is suggested that there are two ways of involvement in the provincial SIBD. One is obligation which mostly occurs when the SSRO cooperates with government organisations. Another is voluntary which mostly occurs between the SSRO and three actors: external offices, the representatives, and local organisations. In this section, the involvement is further analysed to portray the degree of collaboration in each selected province based on the framework suggested earlier. Consequently, it is found that most of inter-organisational relations, specifically governmental relations, are through contracting with two collaborative relations in Phrae and Nan each (see Table 5.13).

This could be briefly explained by province. In Chiang Mai, only two patterns of relationship – contracting, cooperation – coexist. For all actors involved with the SSRO obligatorily, their relations fall into the contracting pattern. As most government organisations are in obligatory relationships with the SSRO, their relationships with the SSRO are thus contracting. In contrast, for all voluntary involvement, these relations fall on cooperation pattern. These includes relationships between the SSRO and two types of actor (external office, representative) For the external, they could have denied taking part in the PSSS as it was not their duty but they accepted the SSRO's request since, as they claimed, it was inter-governmental cooperation or *kwaam-ruam-mue* (interview, Maharaj Hospital, 7 December 2011) or social contribution (interview, McCormick Hospital, 6 December 2011). In contrast, the representatives of employers and employees voluntarily participated in SIBD because, as they claimed, it was an honour to be part of the PSSS.

In Lamphun, two relationship patterns – contracting, cooperation – similarly coexist with the line clearly drawn between government organisations and non-government organisations. All government organisations are in the contracting pattern as they are obligatorily involved with the SSRO. Differently, the external office (Hariphunchai Memorial Hospital) and the representatives of employers and employees are in the cooperation pattern as they are voluntarily involved with the SSRO. Still, considering the GCS project in which the Lamphun SSRO cooperated with the governor, the SSRO-governor pattern could be coordination. Although, regarding the assumptions

that organisation A (the SSRO) is a focal organisation who starts the interrelation with organisation B (governor in this case), this SSRO-governor interrelation could be contracting instead of coordination as the GCS is in fact the governor's field of service delivery which is not the same field as SIBD (the field of concern). However, following the assumption that B is obliged to interact with A, this relation could be coordination. Thus, three patterns – contracting, cooperation, coordination – coexist in Lamphun.

In Phrae, three patterns – contracting, cooperation, collaboration – coexist. Firstly, similarly to Chiang Mai, most government organisations (except an external office) are in a contracting relationship with the Phrae SSRO. Secondly, two relations – SSRO-representative, SSRO-external – are in cooperation pattern as the SSRO is obliged to cooperate while representatives and external office voluntarily cooperate with the SSRO. Lastly, the SSRO-local relation is distinctive as it is in collaboration pattern. In this relation, the SSRO and local organisations voluntarily work together in the CLO project.

Lastly, in Nan, three patterns – contracting, cooperation, collaboration – coexist with one unexplained relationship. Firstly, similar to other provinces, most government organisations are in a contracting pattern with the SSRO. Secondly, actors voluntarily work with the SSRO i.e. LAO, and representatives are in a cooperation pattern. However, the SSRO-LAO relation is relatively complicated as they do not only work together in the PSSS but also voluntarily work together in the P&F. This SSRO-LAO relation consequently is not only cooperation but also collaboration, which is the third relationship pattern, exists in this province. For the unexplained relationship, the SSRO-local relation finds nowhere to fit in the framework. Interestingly, the SSRO managed to sign the MOU with the LAO, which makes local governments obliged to participate in SIBD or precisely the P&F. Therefore, an indirect obligatory relation occurs between the SSRO and local organisations in Nan. Although under the late 1990s decentralisation, local governments are relatively autonomous, they cannot deny taking part in this project as it is the LAO's, their mentor's, policy to collaborate with the SSRO.

In conclusion, Chiang Mai is where relations equally appear in contracting and cooperation forms. Lamphun is similar to Chiang Mai, but coordination exists between the SSRO and the governor. Phrae and Nan are where contracting, cooperation, and collaboration similarly coexist. However, differently, collaboration in Phrae occurs in the SSRO-local relation while, in Nan, it is the SSRO-external relation. Therefore, it is concluded that Nan and Phrae are equally collaborative (one collaborative relation exists) while Lamphun (one coordination) and Chiang Mai is less collaborative respectively (neither coordination nor collaboration exist).

### **5.2.2 Labelling collaborative activities**

This research employs Agranoff and McGuire's work (2003), one of widely-accepted collaborative management frameworks (see overview in Rethemeyer, 2005), to develop one aspect of the collaboration measurement. This framework proposes a descriptive analytical method quantifying collaborative activities of a central unit of analysis. As mentioned in Chapter 2, they categorise such activities into five major activities: information seeking (IS), adjustment seeking (AS), policymaking and strategy-making (PM), resource exchange (RE), and project based (PB). Each of these labels can be detailed as below (see Figure 5.13).

Agranoff and McGuire (2003) use descriptive statistics to understand these activities. Data collected by the survey method is quantified and classified into five activity types. They suggest that variation of collaborative activity is a result of exploiting 'complex governing environment strategically (p.89)' which eventually determines how active/inactive their cases are in proceeding collaboration. Therefore, in this section, it is hypothesised that:

'The more variety of collaborative activities in the province, the higher collaboration degree exists'.

Figure 5.8 Agranoff and McGuire's collaborative activities

Label	Activities
Information seeking (IS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek general programme information</li> <li>• Seek new funding of programmes and projects</li> <li>• Seek interpretation of standards and rules</li> <li>• Seek general programme guidance</li> <li>• Seek technical assistance</li> </ul>
Adjustment seeking (AS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regulatory relief, flexibility, or waiver</li> <li>• Statutory relief or flexibility</li> <li>• Request change in official policy</li> <li>• Seeking funding innovation of existing programme</li> <li>• Request model programme involvement</li> <li>• Request performance-based discretion</li> </ul>
Policymaking and strategy-making (PM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gain policymaking assistance</li> <li>• Engage in formal partnership</li> <li>• Engage in joint policymaking and strategy-making</li> <li>• Consolidate policy effort</li> </ul>
Resource exchange (RE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeking financial resources</li> <li>• Employ joint financial incentives</li> <li>• Contract for planning and implementation</li> </ul>
Project based (PB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish partnership for a project</li> <li>• Seek technical assistance</li> </ul>

Source: adapted from Agranoff and McGuire (2003, p.89)

According to the primary data analysis (see Appendix 6), it is found that Nan is the case where collaborative activities are the most varied (see Table 6.2). Phrae, Lamphun, and Chiang Mai are the cases where the variety is less. Firstly, in Nan, four types of collaborative activities – IS, PM, PB, RE – exists. The SSRO-external (namely the LAO) relation is not only information-sharing relation (IS) but both of them work together to ‘gain policymaking assistance (PM)’ and ‘establish partnership for a project (PB)’. As the Nan LAO chief suggests (interview, 1 December 2011),

‘We just help [the SSRO]. This [P&F] project is good for service recipients. There is no reason not to do it.’

Similarly, the SSRO-local relation involves IS and PB activities. Particularly, local governments provide resources for the SSRO (RE) under the supervision of the LAO. As the Nan SSRO chief states (interview, 17 October 2011):

‘The LAO is a regional office coordinating between central and local governments. This is semi-commanding (*Kueng bangkub buncha*). The LAO cannot command [local governments] but they can coordinate [with them] for us. They can discuss and have authority. If they [local

governments] want to get their plan approved, it seems they [local governments and the LAO] rely on each other.’

Table 5.6 Interprovincial comparison of collaborative activities

Actor	Org.	Collaborative activities with the SSRO			
		Chiang Mai	Lamphun	Phrae	Nan
Internal office	EO	IS	IS	IS	IS
	LO	IS	IS	IS	IS
	LWPO	IS	IS	IS	IS
	LSDC	IS	IS	IS	IS
Province head	GO	IS	IS, PB	IS	IS
HCP	PHO	IS	IS	IS	IS
	PH	IS	IS	IS	IS
External office	Ext1	IS	IS	IS	IS, PM, PB
	Ext2	IS			
Representative	EmE1	IS	IS	IS	IS
	EmE2	IS			
	EmR1	IS	IS	IS	IS
	EmR2	IS			
Local organization	Local			IS, PB, RE	IS, PB, RE

Secondly, in Phrae, three different activities – IS, PB, RE – exist in the SSRO-local relation. For instance, the SSRO not only exchanges information (IS) and other resources (RE) but also establishes network in the CLO project (PB). Being asked about the CLO project, the Phrae SSRO chief enthusiastically credited his front-office head as follow (interview, 4 February 2011):

‘This [CLO] project was started by her [pointed to the front-office head]. When I arrived, the project had already been approved. I was also fascinated. How could this [project] be drafted? It is such a surprise since it is, first, the point where inter-organisational cooperation can be built. Second, bringing all sources [of both organisations] to be merged. Third, success or failure of this kind of project depends on public relations. Merging the sources can be another way to publicize [the SSRO’s work].’

Thirdly, in Lamphun, two activities – IS, PB – exist between the SSRO and the governor. For example, the Lamphun Deputy Governor explained the reason why organisations, including the SSRO, should be participating in the GCS as (interview, 11 March 2011)

‘It is important that all provincial offices that share and use government online database participate in the GCS project...’

This participation let both the Lamphun SSRO and the Lamphun governor work together in terms of information sharing (IS) and partnership establishment (PB).

Lastly, in Chiang Mai, only one type of activity – IS – exists. In fact, the Chiang Mai SSRO chief explains that the SSRO was applying the SSO’s network building principle which could be possible in the future but, at the moment, local-cooperation initiative was not present in Chiang Mai (interview, 3 October 2011). However, according to interviews with most Chiang Mai PSSS members and the documents such as the SSO annual report, there is no other types of collaborative activities in SIBD in Chiang Mai.

### **5.2.3 Examining the degree of collaboration**

Taking relationship patterns and collaborative activities into consideration, Nan is the case with highest degree of collaboration; while Phrae (moderately high), Lamphun (moderately low), and Chiang Mai (Low) are at a lower degree respectively (see Table 6.3). This determination is based on two hypotheses. One is ‘the more collaboration, the higher collaborative degree (see Section 6.1.1)’; another is ‘the more variety of collaborative activities, the higher collaborative degree (see Section 6.1.2)’. Firstly, Chiang Mai is undoubtedly a case of a low degree of collaboration as no evidence of collaboration and only one activity type (IS) are found. Secondly, although two activity types (IS, PB) and coordination exists in the province, Lamphun is determined as a moderately-low case because no collaboration is found. Thirdly, Phrae is the case of moderately high collaboration where one relation is found to be collaboration and three activity types (IS, PM, RE) exist. Its degree of collaboration is not determined as high as Nan because, although only one collaborative relation is similarly found, Nan has four different collaborative activities (IS, PM, PB, RE).

Table 5.7 Collaboration degree of each case

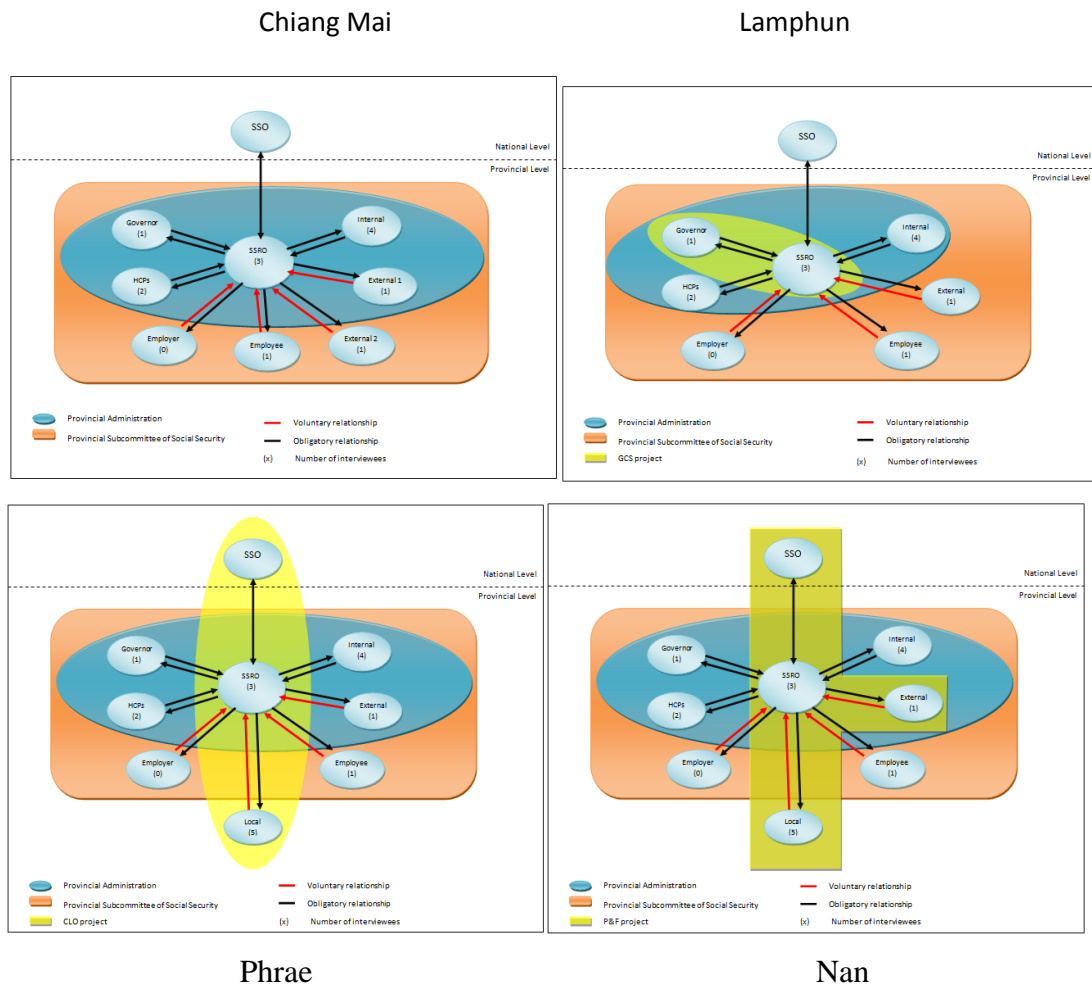
Case	Relationship pattern	Collaborative activity	Collaboration degree
Chiang Mai	Contracting; Cooperation	IS	Low
Lamphun	Contracting; Cooperation; Coordination	IS, PB	Moderately low
Phrae	Contracting; Cooperation; Collaboration	IS, PM, RE	Moderately High
Nan	Contracting; Cooperation; Collaboration	IS, PM, PB, RE	High

Drawing from inter-organisational relations and influential actors, this section illustrates the pattern of SIBD in each province. The illustration is developed from the one presented earlier in Chapter 5. It further discusses on how the relations impact the diversification of SIBD in each province by comparing the case to national norm (see Chapter 3) and other selected provinces. In brief, the degree of collaboration is positively associated with the diversity degree. For instance, Nan as the most distinctive case has the highest degree of collaboration. Similarly, this is followed by Phrae, Lamphun and Chiang Mai respectively.

### 5.2.4 Collaboration and SIBD patterns

Section 5.2.3 indicates the degree of collaboration in order to understand a causal link between the diversity and collaboration. Chiang Mai is the case where no distinctive project is found and degree of collaboration is low. Inter-organisational relations in the province are either contracting (SSRO's obligatory and actor's obligatory) or cooperation (SSRO's obligatory and actor's voluntary) (see Figure 5.10). This, consequently, suggests that SIBD pattern is rarely diversified from the national standard. For instance, the SSROs rigidly follow the SSO's policies. Also, none of the actors are influential to SIBD in particular as resource being shared in social insurance administration in the province is only information.

Figure 5.9 Actors and relations in provincial SIBD in selected provinces



In Lamphun, most relations are either contracting or cooperation, similar to Chiang Mai. However, the degree of collaboration is shifted to moderately low regarding the fact that the coordination and project-based activity between the SSRO and the governor exist in the form of GCS project. The governor could have influence over SIBD as he could provide extra financial resource for the SSRO. This, consequently, makes SIBD pattern in Lamphun slightly different from the SSO's standardized pattern (see Figure 5.10). With moderately high degree of collaboration, pattern of SIBD in Phrae is diversified from national pattern and the one in Chiang Mai (see Figure 5.10). Although most relations are contracting and cooperation similar to Chiang Mai and Lamphun, the CLO project created collaboration between the SSRO and local organisations. This is arguably a major factor of the diversification. Also,



local organisation is an important partner whose collaboration is needed to complete the diversified service of SIBD.

Similar to Phrae, the pattern of SIBD in Nan is diversified from national norm but with the highest degree of collaboration among cases. Most relations between the SSRO and provincial actors in Nan are unsurprisingly contracting and cooperation while two relations (SSRO-LAO, SSRO-local) are not (see Figure 5.10). This is because the P&F is operated creating a triangle relation in which the SSRO is a host, the LAO is a facilitator, and local governments are operative units. Within this project, collaboration between the SSRO and the LAO is crucial as they agreed to start an initiative project together. However, the relation between the SSRO and local governments is somewhat ambiguous as local governments are bound to cooperate with the SSRO regarding the contract signed between the SSRO and the LAO. Thus, two actors with significant influence to SIBD include an external office, namely the LAO, as a cooperating policy-maker and local governments as cooperating service providers.

A question left unanswered from the above discussion is ‘what are other factors of these inter-organisational relations?’ Inter-organisational trust is suggested as relational factors (Gulati, 1995; Gulati & Nickerson, 2008) and earlier discussion portrays how it was developed within SIBD as resource exchanges were undertaken. Earlier sections already discussed the trust built in-between resource exchange. However, external factors – e.g. socio-political factors – are suggested as relational factors too (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). This section thus clarifies socio-political factors at the provincial level (e.g. size of the province, inter-organisational communication).

Presumably, province size is a factor affecting tight or loose ties between organisations. Firstly, ‘size’ contains two implications – geographical, workload – in this research. Geographically, Chiang Mai is the biggest whereas Nan, Lamphun, and Phrae are smaller respectively. In terms of workloads, the province with more workloads per SSRO officials is ‘bigger’. This could possibly consider from the number of population in each province. Therefore, Chiang Mai with the population

of 1,640,479 is the biggest while Nan (476,363), Phrae (460,756) and Lamphun (404,560) are smaller respectively (2010 statistics, DOPA website).

Does the province's size really matter to inter-organisational relations in the province? Several interviewees agree with the size significance towards their relationships with other organisations. For example, the Chiang Mai EO chief stated that Chiang Mai was a big province 'so usually the PAUs needed to keep focus on our tasks' (interview, 4 October 2011). However, some argue that size is not the matter since they would know how to manage the relations. For example, the Chiang Mai deputy governor stated that Chiang Mai administration was not different from other province; rather it was easier since the provincial culture was relatively compromise and agreeable. Also, the Nan EO chief stated that she would employ the same management style wherever she worked.

Considering all interviews' data, however, it appears that the province's size does matter to inter-organisational relations as it also relates to inter-organisational communication. As in Nan, a small province in both terms, inter-organisational relations seemed to be closer compared to Chiang Mai a big province in both terms too. In Nan, besides the PSSS meeting, the governor organised daily informal meeting (*sapa-gafae*) in weekday morning. This informal communication, therefore, was perceived as more productive way to build up cooperation. For example, the LO chief mentioned that he and the SSRO chief went cycling together sometimes before or after the *sapa-gafae* and they had a chat on either general topic or work-related topic (interview, 12 October 2011). However, it is observed that no one in Chiang Mai mentioned anything similar to *sapa-gafae* activities. Evidently, informal communication is more significant to tightening the relations than formal communication.

### **5.3 A bi-dimensional framework: diversity and the SSRO's responsiveness**

The previous discussion only examines resource dependence relations and identifies which of these relations are influential to SIBD. It clarifies relationship patterns, the

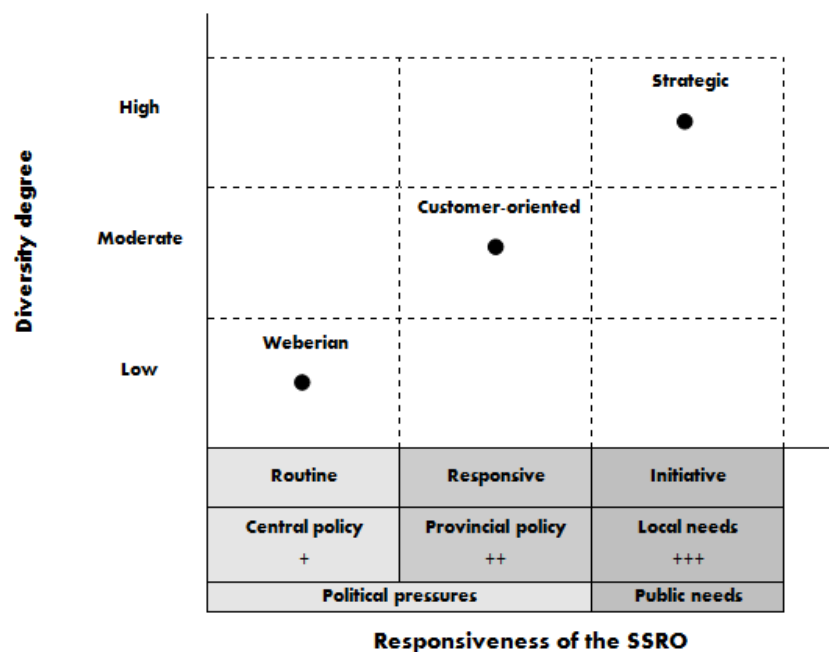
degree of collaboration and the resource exchanges in four provinces and discusses the diversity of SIBD in the dimension of IORs. Therefore, this section further discusses each selected province under two dimensions: diversity and responsiveness. It investigates the extent to which the diversity of SIBD exists in relation to the SSRO's responsiveness. Its main question is *'to what extent does the experience of the four provinces studied suggest diversity and responsiveness in SIBD?'*

Moving the discussion from collaboration between elite actors, this section clarifies diversification and responsiveness to the needs of service users in the case of three of the provinces through case-studies of innovative projects. In brief, it is found that Chiang Mai appears to be the case where SIBD remained standardized. It does not only illustrate the rigidity of policy implementation but also emphasises a uniform pattern of SIBD. Lamphun is similar to Chiang Mai as the SSRO routinely operated their service. However, the Lamphun SSRO's GCS project exemplifies a slightly different pattern of SIBD. Phrae and Nan are provinces where the SSROs delivered distinctive projects, CLO and P&F respectively. These are derived from, as they claimed, the officials' sympathy towards insured persons.

In Chapter 2, three patterns of SIBD diversification – Weberian, Customer-oriented, Strategic – are proposed. This section considers the four cases in the characteristics of diversity degree and responsiveness (see Figure 5.5). Firstly, each provincial SIBD pattern is categorised into three different degrees of diversity – low, medium, high. To do so, projects and activities of the SSRO are investigated and compared with the uniform pattern presented in Section 3.2.4. The more they are different from the national norm; the higher degree of the diversity they have. Secondly, three levels of responsiveness are specified as routine (low), responsive (moderate), and initiative (high). Three sets of project are of concern as service delivery activities including: projects specified in the SSO's strategies (routine projects), projects operated in response to local political pressures which could similarly be found elsewhere in the country (responsive projects), and projects newly created by the SSRO and never been operated elsewhere (initiative projects).

Being aware of quantifying qualitative data, it is admitted that this degree of diversity is based on the researcher's analysis only. No statistical methods are involved in this distinction between low, moderate, and high. It is basically an estimation based on qualitative data. As a qualitative research, this continuum is considered as an attempt to illustrate a simplified picture of the phenomena. According to Greenwood (2002, p. 140), it is not 'a monopoly of truth' but 'assists in providing helpful insights'.

Figure 5.10 Analytical framework of SIBD diversification



### 5.3.1 Chiang Mai: standardized delivery pattern?

The pattern of SIBD in Chiang Mai is the most standardized one compared to other selected provinces. It reflects the uniform pattern of SIBD. This is because of the Chiang Mai SSRO's routine and rule-bound characteristics and circumstances. For instance, the Chiang Mai SSRO followed the service guidelines of the SSO rigidly. Being requested to provide their annual strategy, the Chiang Mai SSRO gave the

researcher the SSO's strategy and, as the contact person<sup>20</sup> suggested, the SSRO employed the same strategy as the SSO. Searching through all accessible documents e.g. plans, projects, activities of the Chiang Mai SSRO, the researcher found nothing diversified from the SSO guidelines. Moreover, Table 6.1 shows special projects of several SSROs listed in the SSO's 2009 annual plan<sup>21</sup>. These projects are written in the SSO's plan regarding distinctiveness that has been accepted by the SSO. In fact, some are not that unique but the SSO still accepted them as 'special' for some reasons. However, the discussion on this will be provided in another section. As shown, the Chiang Mai SSRO's projects have never existed in this list.

Table 5.8 Initiative projects in the SSO's 2009 Annual Plan

Province	Project Title
Nan	Thinking Partner & Friends
Nan	Network relations for social insurance development
Ratchaburi	Training for new employers and employees who lacks understanding of their legal duties and responsibilities
Chumpon	Building up knowledge and understanding of sickness and injury benefit
Prajuabkirikan	Educating community on social insurance laws

Although the Chiang Mai SSRO has two offices - one in the city centre (*Muang* District) and another in *Fang* District, this is not considered as a responsive action of the SSRO to local needs in this research. The branch was officially established to provide service for insured persons in remote areas. However, its responsibilities are repetitive to the SSRO (see Labour Ministry Regulation on Organisational Structure, 2011). This branch, hence, represents the Chiang Mai SSRO and is operated as if they are a division of the SSRO not an independent delivery agency. Although the pattern of dual service accesses<sup>22</sup> in Chiang Mai is slightly different from the national norm (a single access at the SSRO office), their service delivery pattern rigidly follows the standardized pattern.

<sup>20</sup> The contact person is the head of the Chiang Mai SSRO's administrative division.

<sup>21</sup> This 2009 annual plan is the first plan provincial initiative projects are officially listed.

<sup>22</sup> Dual-access pattern (main office and its branch) exists in 24 out of 75 provinces (SSO website, accessed on 9 June 2012).

The Chiang Mai SSRO in fact tried proposing a particular project titled ‘Promotion of Work Security and Insurance for Labourers in Chiang Mai’ to the Governor’s Office in order to get into the provincial strategy budget (see Chiang Mai Operational Plan (Budget Proposition) 2010, Chiang Mai Governor’s Office, 2010). However, this project has never been approved or operated. According to the Governor’s Office official, this project had been terminated before the Chiang Mai Operational Plan was completed. In response to the termination, the Chiang Mai SSRO chief presumed that the Chiang Mai SSRO might have found that this project had been compliant with the SSO’s policy and changed their mind afterwards. As he explained, to request the Governor’s budget or not, the basic principle is that the proposed project must not be repetitive to the projects proposed to the SSO. To reaffirm his statement, the researcher searches through the Chiang Mai SSRO’s operational plan and finds a similar project existed i.e. the ‘disseminating social insurance knowledge’ project.

No local cooperation project similar to the Nan and Phrae SSROs’ initiative projects exists. Being asked about local cooperation, the Chiang Mai SSRO Chief indicated that the SSRO was applying the network building principle suggested by the SSO and it could be possible in the future. At the moment, such initiative was not present in Chiang Mai. Nonetheless, it could be argued that cooperation with local organisations does exist in Chiang Mai. Still, the cooperation in which local governments provide pamphlets and local organisations occasionally participate in the SSRO’s seminars are not considered as initiative activities in this research. These activities are practices rigidly following the SSO’s guidelines. Also, the Chiang Mai SSRO’s budget rigidly conformed to the SSO’s budget plan (see Social Security Office, 2008b). In other words, no funding was requested or approved for the Chiang Mai SSRO’s initiative project. This is different from the Nan SSRO’s budget plan which contained a particular budget for the P&F. Also, no initiative projects were found in the documents given or produced by the Chiang Mai SSRO (e.g. Chiang Mai SSRO annual budget 2010, minutes of meetings, meeting agendas) or in the SSO’s strategies (Social Security Office, 2008a, 2009a).

More interestingly, the Chiang Mai SSRO could work without a Chief for almost a year in 2011. For instance, in the first fieldwork of this research which started in December 2010, the gatekeeper asked if the interview with the Chief could be substituted by someone else since the position was unoccupied. The researcher agreed to interview with any acting chief at the time but the confirmation process lasted until the first fieldwork finished. Then, in the second fieldwork started in October 2011, the researcher approached the SSRO again and found that the Chief had recently been appointed in the early September of 2011. This should have been troublesome to SIBD to some extent but it was not. All of the SSRO's tasks were operated under rules and regulations of the government and the SSO as, for example, the Deputy Director of LSDC suggested (interview, 5 October 2011),

‘the SSRO can work although they don’t have the chief. They still have acting chief and everything. [They] just follow the rules’.

Indeed, bureaucracy is supposed to work without attachment to a person but a year without the chief reinforces how routinely the Chiang Mai SSRO's has functioned.

Moreover, local politics in Chiang Mai seems to put high pressure on the SSRO resulting in their routine delivery pattern. According to the Lamphun SSRO Chief who was the former Chief of the Chiang Mai SSRO, administering SIBD in Chiang Mai was stressful so that it affected his health. In off-record conversation, he pointed out that the politics in Chiang Mai was substantial. Seemingly, lots of powerful entrepreneurs and politicians somehow pressured the SSRO. Although this issue remained unclear since the Chief did not want to clarify, it was somewhat evident when looking at the problem of contribution evasion in the province. For instance, as the employer had somehow avoided paying contribution for a period of time, the SSRO still did not manage to impose it. Therefore, dealing with this high pressure may make the SSRO's work more difficult to be initiative compared to other provinces.

### 5.3.2 Lamphun and the GCS project: Slightly or fairly diversified pattern?

In Lamphun, SIBD was presumably diversified from the uniform pattern as it was believed that the GCS project was operated because the SSRO wished to expand service access to insured persons in an industrial park. However, it is evident that the SSRO in fact participated in the GCS in response to the provincial governor rather than their initiation. The project is in fact one of the Ministry of Interior's (MoI) policies being implemented in all provinces. Its rationale is to establish a one-stop shop of public services in communal areas such as shopping malls or train stations. It is optional for all regional offices, including the SSRO, to participate in the project.

The Lamphun SSRO participated in the project due to support from the governor. At the beginning of the project, the Governor's Office provided a space and staffs for the GCS centre. For instance, the Office paid for the space rental in the shopping mall and hired temporary employees to work at the counter. According to the Chief, if the Governor did not provide financial support back at the beginning, the SSRO would not have been provided their services at the counter service in the shopping mall. As he stated (interview, 22 February 2011),

‘The GCS project is not the SSRO's direct responsibility; it is the Administrator's<sup>23</sup> [the responsibility of the Governor's Office]. Simply speaking, it is not easy to work while “eating a salt crystal [*Gud Gon Klua Gin*]<sup>24</sup>”. Therefore, we need to be clear [about financial support of the project] before taking part in any project.’

However, as the project came to the end of its first year, such supports were minimised and a few provincial offices remained serving at the counter service in the shopping mall. The SSRO was refraining from the GCS participation. After the first year ended and the new Governor appointed, no funding was provided so that the

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<sup>23</sup> ‘Administrator’ is literally translated from ‘*pok-krong*’. The full form of this term is ‘*pok-krong chung-wat*’ which literally means ‘provincial administrator’. This term is usually used by provincial bureaucrats to refer to the Governor's Office. Sometimes it is shortened as either ‘*pok-krong*’ or ‘*chung-wat* (province)’.

<sup>24</sup> This idiom means ‘living a tough and poor life’.



SSRO stopped delivering their service in the shopping mall. According to the SSRO Chief,

‘...we have no financial support. [Previously,] We used to pay for overtime wages ourselves. However, we can’t bear the cost any longer. The province<sup>25</sup> [the Governor’s Office] should realize how the activity could be operated. There’s a cost of everything e.g. electricity, paper, and so on. At the beginning, the former governor had spared the provincial budget for this [GCS project]. Frankly, if he did not provide financial support, the project would have been hardly operated.’

The Chief also reasoned that if insured persons came to the SSRO office it would be more convenient for them. They could submit the claim, wait for the result, and if succeed get the cash benefits within a few hours. If they go to the counter service, what they could do was only to submit the claim. They still needed to come to the SSRO office to proceed to the claiming.

Sharing the same opinion, the SSRO official stated that the project did not work since insured persons might find coming to the SSRO office quicker and more comprehensive. According to the interview (Lamphun SSRO head, 9 November 2011):

Respondent: ‘...mostly, originally, we were based there [at the GCS counter] to collect data [related to the claim] for benefit consideration. However, people [or service users] [would rather] come to the [SSRO] office because the distance between the industrial park and the office is short. They come here [and get] quicker and more comprehensive services. Over there [at the GCS counter], we don’t pay benefits; just receive claim forms and forward them here’

Researcher: ‘Was the reason of the SSRO’s GCS participation to provide extra-time service?’

Respondent: ‘...since the Ministry [of Labour] emphasised integrated services of the Ministry... they planned to cooperate with the province [Governor’s Office]. However, it seemed not work because the GCS service users mostly use particular services such as utility bill payment, transportation fee payment, ID card issue. Ours [the SSRO’s] is just collecting documents and forwarding them here so the

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<sup>25</sup> This is literally translated from ‘*chung-wat*’ (see earlier footnote).

users would better come to the office. Otherwise, if they want to pay [contributions], they can go to banks.

Researcher: 'Originally, it was assumed that the SSRO could decide whether to participate in the GCS.'

Respondent: 'It is semi-obligation (*kueng-bungkab*).'

The SSRO had had their staffs at the GCS counter (10.00-17.00, Mon-Fri) since the beginning of the project. However, the only service provided by the SSRO at the counter was only document submission. From mid 2011, they had stopped doing that.

Also, the GCS was a result of the negotiations between the governor and the SSRO. Since the GCS was not included in the SSO's policy, it was unnecessary for the SSRO to be involved in the project. However, the Lamphun Deputy Governor explained the selection criteria of organisations participating in the GCS as (interview, 11 March 2011)

'It is important that all provincial offices sharing and using government online database participate in the GCS project...'

Accordingly, the voluntary principle seems not to be applied in the selection of participants in the GCS in Lamphun. Unsurprisingly, in response to the governor's request, the Lamphun SSRO took part in the project.

Seemingly, the Lamphun SSRO could be categorised as 'responsive' since they responded to political pressure (the governor's request) in the province. However, Lamphun remains to be a routine case with a slight shift towards 'being responsive' for three reasons. Firstly, as discussed in the previous section, the SSRO responded to the SSO's or the Governor's policies rather than local needs. Secondly, the Lampphun SSRO did not draft their provincial strategy. Being asked about their strategy, the Chief explained that it was the same as the SSO's strategy (Chief of Lamphun SSRO, interview, 22 February 2011). Hence, no documents on the Lamphun SSRO's strategy were given. Also, the researcher went further to the

SSRO's website and found nothing related to the SSRO's strategy. Therefore, it is apparent that the SSRO intended to follow the SSO's policies only.

The last reason refers to the SSRO chief's response to the question of service diversification and innovation. He stated that social insurance system should be standardized so that no diversification existed in social insurance system. Also, the Chief believed that the Lamphun SSRO was trying to originate initiative projects as he said:

Respondent: 'We are trying to think about it [initiative project] ... we [analyse] what we have got and what we have lost. We tried to fulfill the gaps by coordinating with local governments. We even went further to train local officer on regulations and practical guidelines. The second step is to build up the network of which we could spread the news of changes to public. These are what we have been thinking.'

Researcher: And how has the network been developed?

Respondent: Admittedly, it is under development. Each staff [in all provincial offices]. Each organisation [in the province]. All are trying to set up the network. ...It [network building] is a mainstream now. We are in the stream too. ...However, our specific point is in the enterprises. But we do not just stop there only. We also expand it to auntie, grannies, [to] however small [enterprises].

However, the projects or activities he mentioned could be found in any accessible documents. With regards to the three reasons, it is thus concluded that the Lamphun SSRO is in fact an obedient delivery agency not a responsive agency.

### **5.3.3 Phrae and the CLO project: Highly diversified pattern?**

Phrae is the province where the SSRO operated the Co-operation with Local Organisations (CLO) project. Based on the SSO's policy guidelines, it is an initiative formulating extra service accesses in remote areas. The SSRO's cooperation with local-level organisations was suggested in the SSO's policy documents. This suggestion has existed in Thailand's social insurance administration for more than a decade. In the five-year strategic plans of the SSO after the late 1990s, the SSO attempted to improve the service and benefit delivery through cooperation with other

organisations (Social Security Office, 1996, 2002, 2009c, 2010). Specifically, it encouraged the SSRO to cooperate with employers and schools in an attempt to establish 'better understanding' on social insurance for existing and future insured persons. This concept of cooperation has recently been referred to as 'network building' in the two most recent strategies, 2005-2009 and 2010-2014.

In order to pursue the SSO's approval, the Phrae SSRO designed the Cooperation with Local Organisations (CLO) project reflecting the concept of network building (Phrae SSRO, 2010b). Although the Phrae SSRO chose 'cooperation' to name their project, they need to refer to 'network building' as the ultimate aim of the project. Since the latter term has been emphasised in the SSO's recent strategies, the SSRO mentioned it in their project in order to ensure that the approval would be granted. According to the CLO project proposal, the main objective of this project was to create a network which could provide closer and more convenient service access for insured persons (Phrae SSRO, 2010a). Eventually in 2010, the project was finally approved with additional support from senior bureaucrats (Phrae SSRO official, interview, 4 February 2011).

The Phrae's CLO project development could be analysed in three stages: the initiation stage, the establishing stage, and the continuation stage. The initiation stage means the period in which the concepts and ideas of the project were built up; whereas, the establishing stage is when the SSRO attempted to set the project framework and resources. The continuation stage is when the SSRO attempt to pave the way for the sequel of the project. Firstly, in the initial stage, the CLO project initiation is a result of the administrative autonomy rather than the negotiation between policy actors. The Phrae SSRO aimed to respond to local factors and implement the SSO's policy of cooperation, they thus initiated the CLO project. The head of Phrae SSRO's front office who was a key person in this stage indicated the local needs were influential to the project design as follow (interview, 4 February 2011);

'...We saw insured persons travel to the [Phrae SSRO] office from different districts and areas. Some of them who travel from the

district have to come here very early in the morning because there is only one bus from the district at around four or five o'clock in the morning. Some people who travel from other areas are the persons who previously worked in other provinces or countries and then migrated back home. These people also experience the difficulties of travelling to the [Phrae SSRO] office.'

All of the project details were designed and drafted by the Phrae SSRO. None of the policy actors got involved at this initiation stage. After the project draft was finished, the SSRO proposed the CLO project to the PSSS and got the primary approval without objections. The project, therefore, was completely an idea of the SSRO because the policy actors offered neither suggestions nor objections.

Secondly, at the establishing stage, the CLO is not only a result of the SSRO's autonomy but also of the negotiations with policy actors. Defining the framework and seek for resources was the responsibility of the Phrae SSRO. As they were the only one who drafted the project, they decided how the project framework would look like and what kind of resources they would be required. As the project focus was on the cooperation with local organisations, the negotiations with them became an important part at this establishing stage. Local organisations had become potential partners and resource providers. Each of them was contacted by the Phrae SSRO and could voluntarily take part in the project. It was necessary that the SSRO could convince each organisation to participate in the project and, within this step, a negotiation between the SSRO and the organisation occurred. To get the cooperation from local organisations, the SSRO clarified what they would do and what the cooperating organisation would get in return. Consequently, 23 local governments took part in the project whereas other 61 did not.

The continuation stage started when the Phrae SSRO was satisfied with the CLO operation in the first year and said it would like to continue the project. In the meeting on 19 October 2010, the SSRO summarised the progress of the CLO project stating that the project was 'well-cooperated' and participating organisations provided useful information and documents. Three examples were given in the meeting (see Phrae SSRO, 2010b). Firstly, with the connection established in the CLO, one of the cooperating organisations (namely the Baan Lao SAO) informed an

emergency case of fire in a local wood carving factory to the SSRO and the SSRO could help the affected insured persons immediately. Secondly, during the flood in 2010, employers and employees in affected areas could contact the SSRO or claim benefits via cooperating organisations. Thirdly, as the Phrae Hospital participated in the project, the SSRO received more information through this channel improving their database on, for example, employment and update of individual entitlement.

The CLO project is distinctive in four respects: type of cooperating organisations, long-term cooperation, cooperation activities, and response to local needs. Firstly, the cooperation in this project was to construct the networks with local organisations such as municipalities, the SAOs (sub-district administrative organisations), local hospitals. While two compulsory projects of the SSO are to cooperate with employers and schools as mentioned earlier, cooperation with local organisations is optional. Secondly, the project attempts to build long-term cooperation with participants through the training of service agents and the establishment of service accesses in each cooperating local organisations.

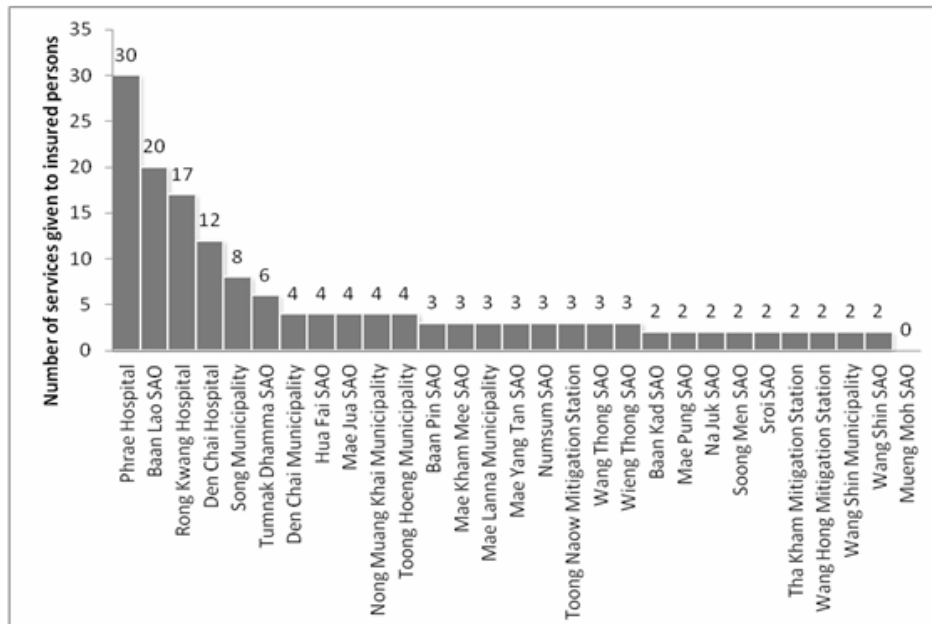
Thirdly, in relation to the second reason, the cooperation activities in the CLO project include local staff's training. Local cooperation in SIBD occurred not only in Phrae but, in the other provinces, local organisations were mostly information centres, pamphlet distributors, or occasional exhibition centres. However, in the Phrae's project, service agents, nominated from the cooperating organisations, were trained by the SSRO. One representative from each cooperating organisation is regularly invited to seminars and trainings to become a service agent. Also, service accesses, including document shelves and service desks, were set up in local organisations' offices.

Fourthly, the CLO project appears to respond to local needs rather than the SSO's policy. According to the Phrae SSRO officials (interview, 4 February 2010), the CLO project was originated in an attempt to assist insured persons who lived in remote areas and found the journey to the SSRO office troublesome. It took some recipients up to a day or more to claim the benefits. Particularly, if required documents were not provided, they had to go back and forth between the SSRO and

their residences. The official stated that this situation was inconvenient and tiresome particularly for the low-income recipients and, thus, the project was a response to this local need. Statistically, 66.53% of insured persons in Phrae are concentrated in *Muang* District (city centre); while the rest are dispersed in seven other districts (Social Security Office, 2008). In terms of efficiency, providing a single service access in the city centre is sensible but, regarding needs of recipients, the CLO project is necessary.

The performance report of the CLO project was presented in the PSSS meeting on 19 October 2010. Each participating organisation kept records of their service and submitted these to the SSRO (see Figure 6.2). As is being shown, only four organisations frequently served the recipients. It should be noted that these four organisations comprise three hospitals and a single local government. As the hospitals are medical service providers who directly contact with insured persons and sickness benefits are claimed the most in social insurance, it might be a convenient access for insured persons to claim their benefits when they are taking medical care.

Figure 5.11 Service frequency of cooperating organisations in the CLO project



Source: Minutes of meeting (Phrae SSRO, 2010b)

Differently from most local governments participating in the CLO, the Baan Lao SAO reportedly granted services more than 20 times. At local government offices, although service access was established in each participating organisation, few employees and employers acknowledged, or used, the service. As shown in Figure 6.2, most participating organisations served insured persons only once or twice within ten months (January-October 2010). However, the case of Baan Lao is different. According to the SSRO chief (interview, 4 February 2011) and Baan Lao SAO official (interview, 3 March 2011), this was caused by the incident of fire in local wood carving factory in the Baan Lao sub-district. Since the SSRO was the first government organisation arrived at the place of incident, the SAO and affected people recognized the reliability of the SSRO and the existence of the CLO project.

Hence, the Phrae SSRO is labelled as an initiative delivery agency because of their CLO project which reflects responsiveness to its local contexts. Also, three more factors (provincial strategy, activeness, participative character) are essential to the Phrae SSRO's responsiveness. Firstly, the Phrae SSRO drafted their provincial strategy instead of using the SSO's national strategy. For example, the Phrae SSRO's 2010 vision was 'ascending to leading organisation, building up social insurance under principles of good governance and participation' (Phrae SSRO, 2010c). Also, it was specified in its strategy that the Phrae SSRO would have network built for service provision. Undeniably, the Phrae strategy complies with the SSO's strategy but the Phrae SSRO made it more specific and responsive to local factors.

Secondly, the working environment in the Phrae SSRO appeared to be active. For example, in the first time the researcher was at the office to submit a data request letter and get to know a gatekeeper, the official gave as many documents as possible and promised to provide more documents on the day of interview with the chief. Thirdly, the working environment seemed to be participative as, for example, the SSRO chief appeared to respect his subordinates ideas and works. Therefore, the case is proved to be in the High zone of the diversification continuum as hypothesised. Also, the Phrae SSRO is labelled as an initiative delivery agency based



on this initiative project and two more factors (provincial strategy, local-driven staffs).

### **5.3.4 Nan and the P&F project: Highly diversified pattern?**

Nan is the province where the SSRO operated a distinctive initiative, the ‘Thinking Partners and Friends of Insured Persons’ project (P&F). The P&F, started in 2008, is in fact a series of activities comprising M-service (IT system development) and the Mobile Branches (establishing unofficial branches in remote areas). In accordance with their organisational vision, the Nan SSRO had designed the P&F with the rationale of long-term relationship with local organisations. It addressed how local networks could help improving the SSRO’s services. As stated in the P&F proposal (Nan SSRO, 2008):

‘Being reciprocal organisations’ is a goal of which the Nan SSRO aimed to reach by undertaking the project of ‘network of social insurance coordinators’. This network embraced all 99 local governments in Nan. On the 4 of April 2008, the Nan SSRO organised a training seminar for all coordinators from each local government to pursue a better service for local residents.’

The term ‘reciprocal organisations’ had become a major concept of the P&F ever since. It appeared not only in the project proposal but also in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which was drafted for the endorsement by the SSRO and the LAO. ‘Being Reciprocal Organisations’ was defined as following (MoU, Nan SSRO, 2008):

‘Both party [the SSRO and the LAO] agree to support and promote information service of social insurance which will promote quality of life of local people in each administrative territory. This will escalate quality of life of citizens and improve quality of proactive public service which leads to the service in the format of reciprocal organisations.’

Further, there was a clear statement on functions of the SSRO and local governments in this MoU. The LAO chief signed the MoU on behalf of all local governments.

These governments were responsible for ‘providing basic mentor, suggestion, and document check-up for insured persons’. Meanwhile, the Nan SSRO would provide materials and training for local coordinators so that they could deliver such services.

Similar to the CLO project, the P&F development could be divided into three stages: the initiation stage, the establishing stage, and the continuation stage. Firstly, in the initiation stage, the concept of the P&F was started by the SSRO. The introduction of this local cooperation concept was before the current chief’s tenure. It was developed from the ‘Social Insurance Coordinator Network’ project (see P&F project proposal, Nan SSRO, 2008) which the year of its beginning could not be identified. According to the head of Nan SSRO’s front office:

‘...in fact local cooperation had existed before the current head came. We [the Nan SSRO] had done it [cooperating with local governments] for many years. It was originated long before in order to serve insured persons across the province. The SSRO chief just came and made it more official. For instance, he signed the MoU with the LAO which formalized the intergovernmental cooperation.’

However, the P&F became more concrete at the arrival of the current chief. In 2008, soon after he was assigned to the post, he made the existing collaborative activities with local organisations more official by asking the LAO to be part of his plan (interview, 11 October 2011). The formalization of the project by the current Chief was the starting point of the establishing stage. Then, all paper works – e.g. project proposal, MoU – were completed and the project operation had begun.

Secondly, the project establishment was started when the SSRO reported the P&F progress to the PSSS. In the PSSS meeting on 26 November 2008, it was the first time the P&F was mentioned and presented to the PSSS as recorded below (Minutes, Nan SSRO, 2008):

‘The Nan SSRO has been operating the project of ‘social insurance coordinators’ network’ consistently. ...Objectives of the [P&F] project operation are to: comprehend and disseminate information of social insurance [at local government’s office]; facilitate the service for insured persons and employers in remote area which would consequently reduce

the cost [of travelling] for people who came to the SSRO office; and build up intergovernmental relationship to 'reciprocal organisations' as for ultimate benefits of local residents'

Then, the project became part of the Nan SSRO's annual strategy and more established as local network expanded. In 2009, the SSRO presented the project progress again in the PSSS meeting on 17 November 2009. They referred the P&F as part of their new organisational vision which is stated as 'impressive service at the office, accessible service in remote areas'. As mentioned in the Minutes of the Meeting:

'According to the strategy [or vision], the P&F was operated as a result [of the strategy]. In 2009, the SSRO will review the [project] operation in the past year which [the cooperation with local governments] is expanded from 22 to 99 local governments...'

Thirdly, at the continuation stage, the Nan SSRO had a different way in negotiating with the SSO from the Phrae SSRO. While the Phrae might ask for support from the governor in the second year of the CLO project, the Nan SSRO still relied on a budget from the SSO. The Nan SSRO Chief explained that in its first year the Chief went to the SSO to present the project himself. Accordingly, he convinced the SSO by stressing that the project was to provide a quality service of which shared the similar aim with the SSO and the project was approved. As he acknowledged the project might not be approved for the second year, however, he made a request of the fund for the P&F under a different name. When it came into practice, he spent the money on the P&F activities. This, as he claimed, was not illegitimate because he was still using the money on the purpose of SIBD.

The P&F went further after its second year of operation ended in 2009. The project was transformed into two activities: M-service and mobile branches. In the minutes of meeting on 28 June 2010, the M-service was firstly mentioned. The SSRO Chief admitted the obstruction of the P&F and suggested the M-service as stated (Minutes, 28 June 2010, Nan SSRO):

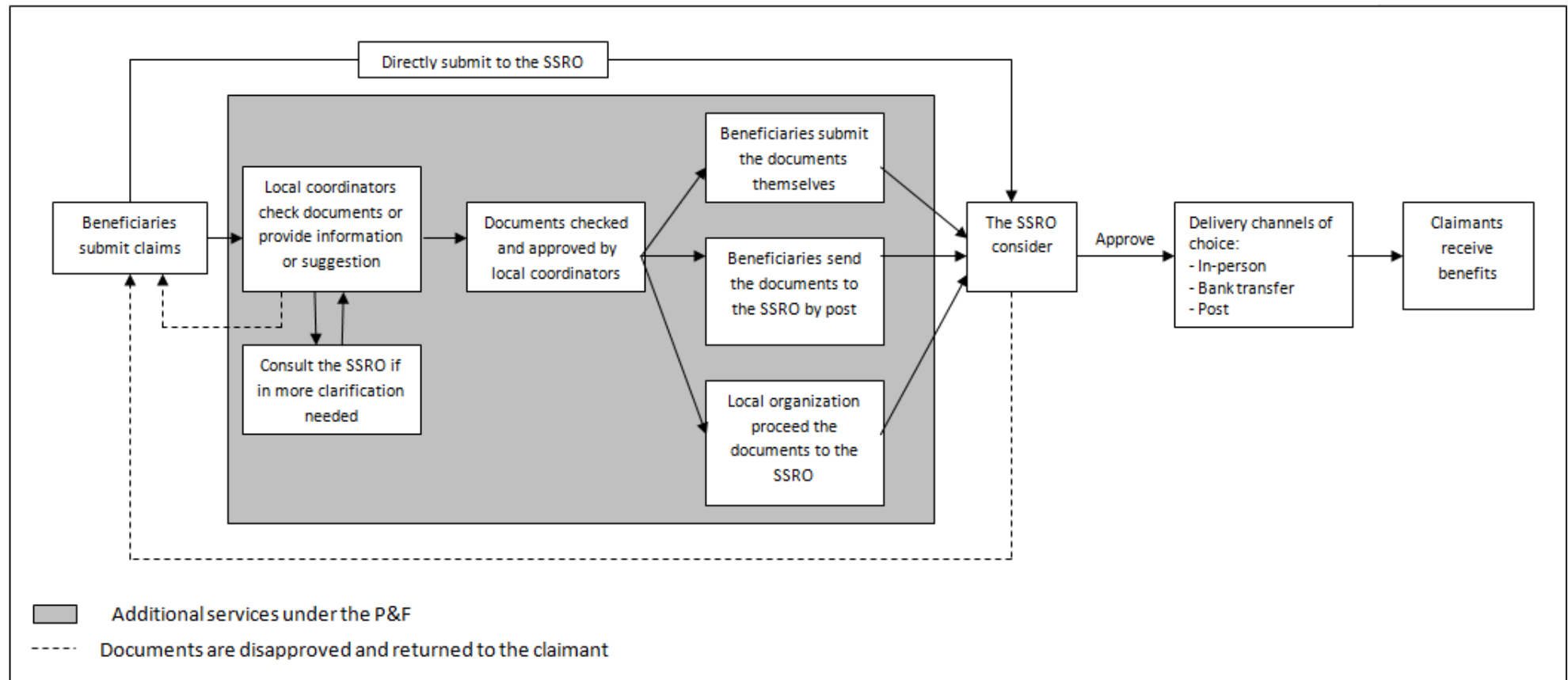
‘... the Nan SSRO has been operating the P&F of which presented in the PSSS meeting earlier. This project responded to the area [difference] but it did not respond to the service [at the SSRO’s office]. Therefore, the Nan SSRO proposed the project to the central [the SSO] and asked for the solution. Consequently, we [the SSRO] and the SSO produced the M-Service software (e-mobile Smart Service). This [M-Service] project is a sequel of the P&F project which aims to reduce the number of insured persons using the service at the SSRO office and settle the service access close to insured persons’ residences. ... In the future, we [the SSRO] hope insured persons would come to the SSRO office the least while the SSRO will go to serve the persons as close as possible to their home.’

The SSRO kept developing the service on the basis of providing the closest access for the insured persons. They even moved forward to establish two unofficial branches in the province. As stated (Minutes, 21 December 2010, Nan SSRO):

‘...the project of “Branch Office Establishment in Pua and Wieng Sa”... The Nan SSRO had started providing services in branch offices from 5 September 2010. On Tuesdays, the service will be provided in Pua District at the Pua Municipality ...On Thursdays, the service will be provided in Wieng Sa District at the Klang Wieng SAO...’

Diversified from the uniform pattern, unique characteristic of the P&F project is a service access at local organisation added to the delivery process (see the grey zone in Figure 6.3). Instead of going to the SSRO’s office directly, the claimant had a choice to go to the local government closest to their residence first. There they could submit the claim with all required documents to the local coordinator (authorised by the SSRO) for the preliminary check-up. If all documents were valid and sufficient, the coordinator would affix a seal of approval on the claim. The claimant then had three choices: submitting the claim at the SSRO’s office, sending the claim to the SSRO by post, or asking the coordinator to proceed. Meanwhile, if the coordinator had any questions, they can consult the SSRO instantly. Hence, the uniqueness is a closer and optional service access. Local governments, the closest public service providers, became a choice of service access for insured persons. In other words, convenient and accessible service is a key characteristic of the P&F.

Figure 5.12 Process of SIBD in Nan



Source: Adapted from Service guideline for Reciprocal Networking Organisations, Nan SSRO, 2008

Still, not many people know about this service as few insured persons were served by local coordinators (interview, Pua Municipality official, 30 November 2011). Despite its uniqueness, the project was arguably not successful. So, is this project still worth being studied? Certainly. The focus of this research falls on the conversion of policy into practice. Diversity of ‘implementation’ not ‘performance’ is a key concern of the research. The P&F project portrays the extent to which diversity of social insurance policy implementation exists in Northern Thailand as the SSRO managed to operate a unique project. Its success may not be substantial but its diversified pattern of delivery is outstanding. Failure or success of the practice is investigated as an indicator of how well the SSRO and local governments worked together. However, this is not to determine whether the project could be an evidence of diversity of policy implementation.

The Nan’s P&F project is also unique when being compared to the Phrae’s CLO project; it shares five similarities but differs in six aspects. Similar to the Phrae SSRO’s CLO project, the Nan SSRO’s P&F project is operated in response to local needs. As shown in Table 6.2, the CLO and P&F projects have many things in common such as concepts, objectives, procedures, budget, and expected outcomes. Firstly, although ‘network organisations’ and ‘reciprocal organisations’ are two different terms, the basic concept is similarly to set up inter-organisational cooperation in the province. Secondly, objectives are differently stated but, again, their core concept is to improve service accessibility. Thirdly, the process of both projects is composed of: participant selection, MoU endorsement, facilities settlement, training, and evaluation. The sequence looks different but, in fact, the content is similar. Fourthly, both projects were subsidized by the SSO’s annual administrative budget equivalent to 10% of the SSF. Lastly, expected outcomes were mainly satisfaction of the service recipients and the established social insurance network. Consequently, their attempts at doing such projects made their pattern of SIBD different from the national pattern designated by the SSO.

Table 5.9 Summary of cooperation projects in Phrae and Nan

	<b>Phrae</b>	<b>Nan</b>
Rationale	network organisations as basic service and knowledge providers	reciprocal organisations
Objectives	a document submission service points; an information centre; and a coordination centre	information centre
	convenient access for insured persons in remote area	convenient access for insured persons in remote area
	cost-saving for service recipients	cost-saving for service recipients
	intergovernmental coordination for local citizens	intergovernmental coordination for local citizens
Target groups	1. local governments 2. community hospitals	99 local governments
Procedures	1. call for application	1. The SSRO designs activities.
	2. have the MoU signed	2. Set up service corner in the office of participating local governments.
	3. organise training for appointed officials	3. Prepare and have the MoU signed
	4. set up the cooperation centre 4.1 publicize knowledge and suggestions on social insurance 4.2 arrange shelves for documents 4.3 appoint officials [of local organisations] 4.4 visit participating local organisations and evaluate the project monthly	4. evaluation 4.1 appraisal (diamond network project) 4.2 relationship development (social insurance network building project)
Timeframe	January – December 2010	June 2008 - December 2008
KPI	Citizens/employers/employees/insured persons receive convenient ( <i>sa-duag</i> ) and accessible ( <i>krob-klum</i> ) services	citizens/employers/employees/insured persons receive accurate ( <i>thook thong</i> ) and fast ( <i>ruad raiw</i> ) services
Budget	Administrative budget from the SSF (10%)	Administrative budget from the SSF (10%)
Expected outcomes	1. cooperation and information centres are set up	1. satisfied service recipients
	2. satisfied service recipients	2. reciprocal network is built up
	3. service recipients save the cost of travelling	
	4. network of reciprocal organisations is set up	

Source: (extracted from Nan SSRO, 2008; Phrae SSRO, 2010a)

The Nan SSRO's cooperation project is different from the Phrae SSRO's in six respects: project establishment, middleman, official appointment, official stamp, facilities installed in local offices, and sequel projects (see Table 6.3). Firstly, the Nan SSRO's P&F is more established than the Phrae SSRO's CLO project. The length of cooperation period can be considered as a crucial factor. Although the P&F was started in 2008, local cooperation between the Nan SSRO and local cooperation had possibly existed before 2006. Therefore, this made the establishment of P&F at ease since local governments had been accustomed to participate in such project. Differently, in Phrae, local cooperation had never been mentioned in any documents before the CLO project started in 2010. Indeed, following the SSO's policy, the Phrae SSRO might ask local governments to distribute pamphlets long before 2010. However, such action is not 'local cooperation' in this research.

Secondly, while the P&F has a middleman to deal with local organisations; the CLO does not. In Nan, the LAO played a role as a coordinator between the SSRO and local governments. This facilitated the process of the P&F operation since the SSRO needed not to contact 99 local governments themselves. The LAO would issue a letter to them on behalf of the SSRO. This request of the LAO was usually followed by local governments since they likely perceived the LAO as their director. In contrast, the Phrae SSRO contacted with each local organisation directly.

Table 5.10 Comparison of cooperation projects in Phrae and Nan

Province	Phrae*	Nan**
Year started	2010	2008
MoU	Yes	Yes
Training for local coordinators	Yes	Yes
Middleman	No	Yes (The LAO)
Official appointment of local coordinators	No	Yes
Official stamp for preliminary document approval	No	Yes (provided by the SSRO)



Province	Phrae*	Nan**
Facilities set up in office of participating organisation	1. shelves 2. forms 3. pamphlets	1. shelves 2. forms 3. pamphlets 4. the SSRO's office space (under Mobile branch project)
Sequel projects	No	1. M-service 2. Mobile branches

\* Phrae SSRO's CLO project proposal (2010)

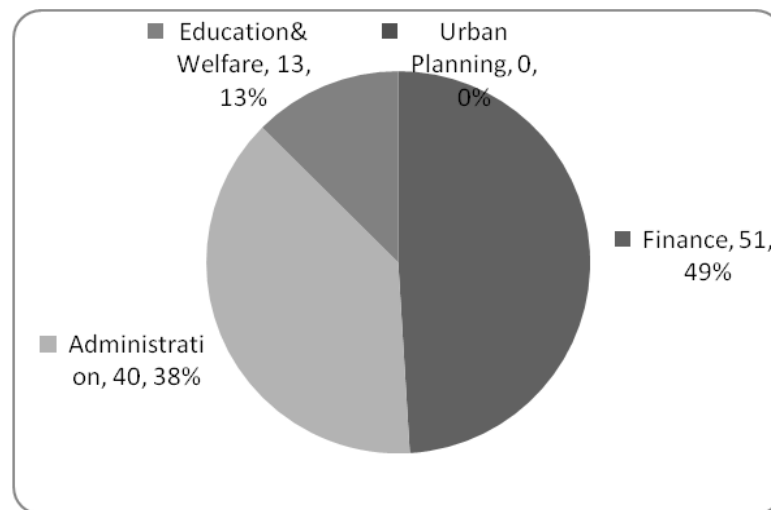
\*\* Nan SSRO's P&F project proposal (2008)

Thirdly, the Nan SSRO had officially appointed local governments according to the Announcement of Nan Governor's Office on Social Insurance Coordinators (Nan Governor's Office, 13 September 2010). This document included the name list of local coordinators. No evidence of such appointment was found within the Phrae SSRO. Fourthly, the Nan SSRO gave local governments an official stamp used as an approved signature when authorised coordinators check documents of insured persons. Again, the Phrae SSRO did not provide such thing for their local coordinators. Fifthly, the facilities installed in local organisations in Nan are more than in Phra. The Nan SSRO set their mobile branch there, while the Phrae SSRO did not. Lastly, in Nan, two projects – M-service, mobile branches – were operated as a sequel of the P&F. Then, the mobile branches project leads to difference of provided facilities between the Phrae and Nan SSRO. In selected offices, local governments provided office spaces for the Nan SSSRO to operate the mobile branches. Evidently, nothing similar happened in Phrae. In fact, these differences also imply the extent to which the P&F is more established than the CLO.

Besides, the appointment of local government officers as social insurance coordinators implies two interesting issues: their perception towards social insurance and the significance of the P&F towards local governments. 104 local officials being appointed as social insurance coordinators under the P&F (see Announcement of the Nan Governor's Office, 13 September 2010) are analysed into two respects: their affiliations (divisions) and their positions. Firstly, affiliation of each appointed local officer implies local government's perception towards the P&F specifically or social insurance in general. Regarding general organisational structure of local

governments, this can be analysed into four groups of officials: the financial division, administrative division, the educational and welfare division, and the urban planning division. Interestingly, 51 and 40 coordinators are from financial and administrative divisions respectively, while 13 are from welfare division and none of them are from urban planning division (see Figure 6.4). This indicates that the cooperation with the SSRO is perceived as a financial or administrative task rather than welfare provision for their residents.

Figure 5.13 Number of local coordinators by division

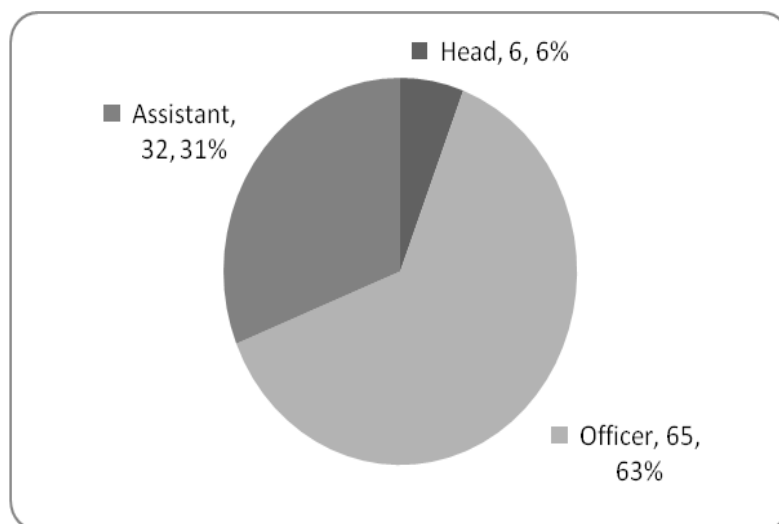


Source: Announcement of the Nan Governor's Office, dated 13 September 2010

Secondly, the hierarchical position of local coordinators may imply how local governments value participation in the P&F. Three levels of employees are shown in Figure 5.14 including: head, officer, and assistant. 'Head' means an employee who works at management level such as head of financial division or chief administrative officer. 'Officer' means either a civil servant or a permanent employee of local governments. Lastly, 'assistant' means a temporary employee whom hired for a specific period i.e. three or six months, one year. Most of appointed local coordinators are officers of local governments; while the least are from management level of the organisations. It is interesting that some local governments appointed division heads as social insurance coordinators. As the SSRO expected that the coordinators should be able to provide services for insured persons, assigning the heads as coordinators raised the question of how regularly they could serve the

recipients on one hand and whether they may assign other officials to do the job on behalf of them on the other.

Figure 5.14 Number of local coordinators by position



Source: Announcement of the Nan Governor's Office, dated 13 September 2010

To conclude, the Nan SSRO is an initiative delivery agency. They provided services not only at the main office but also at local governments' offices and its unofficial branches. Since 2009, the Nan SSRO delineated their organisational vision as 'impressive services at the office, networking services in remote area' under the following rationale (Minutes, 17 November 2009, Nan SSRO):

'As the Nan SSRO is responsible for an entire province where the distance between the SSRO office and districts is significant, [the SSRO questioned] how to insured persons could gain the most of benefits and services. Therefore, the SSRO decided to set such organisational vision.'

To provide 'impressive services', the Nan SSRO improved the facilities at their office. For example, in 2011, the Nan SSRO underwent the project of office refurbishment (Minutes, 4 April 2011, Nan SSRO). Layout of service zone was reorganised, new furniture was inserted, and new queuing IT system was installed. As stated in the Minutes:

'Since a large number of service recipients – employers, employees, governmental and non-governmental organisations – came to the SSRO daily, quick and efficient services are necessary. Service systems,

particularly queuing system, are required to be improved for more efficiency so that no intensity occurs at the service point.’

Besides, to provide ‘networking services’, they operated the project of network building including the P&F, M-service project, and mobile branches (see Section 3.2). These projects had been driven by the Chief since his arrival in the Nan SSRO’s office in 2008. All projects were distinctive and not easily approved by the SSO. However, the chief presented the P&F to the SSO himself. Then, the project was eventually approved.

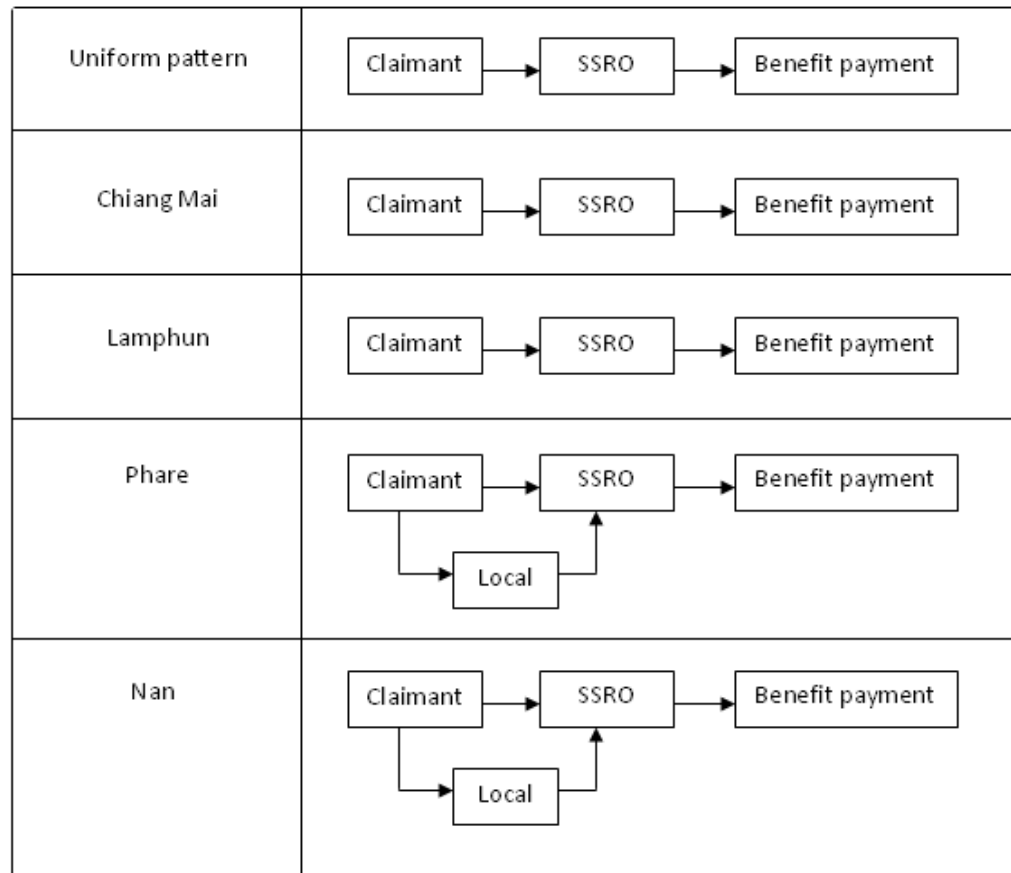
### **5.3.5 Comparison of Delivery Patterns**

In principle, all SSROs should provide the same pattern of SIBD. Evidently, however, Phrae and Nan SSROs have diversified the pattern. While Chiang Mai and Lamphun SSROs similarly deliver the SIBs in the same way as the SSO suggested, Phrae and Nan SSROs initiated the distinctive projects in response to local factors. Figure 6.6 compares SIBD pattern in each province with the uniform pattern in simplified version. Chiang Mai and Lamphun correspond to the uniform pattern, Phrae and Nan share a similar different pattern.

#### ***5.3.5.1 Diversity of SIBD in provinces***

Nan is the most diversified case and Phrae, Lamphun, and Chiang Mai are less diversified respectively in three aspects. Firstly, despite sharing the same pattern, the pattern of Nan SIBD is more diversified than the one in Phrae. The Nan SSRO operated three initiative projects which made the diversified pattern of Nan SIBD more established. Therefore, the diversification degree in Nan is at the higher point than in Phrae. Secondly, SIBD in Lamphun is not as diversified as assumed. The actual degree of diversification in Lamphun is in the Low zone rather than the Medium because the GCS project turned out not to be a responsive project. Thirdly, Chiang Mai is the least diversified as no evidence of diversified service is found.

Figure 5.15 Comparison of SIBD process



Three indicators – number of service accesses, number of insured persons per access, degree of local cooperation – could be listed to determine the degree of SIBD diversity. The most prominent indicator, firstly, is the number of service accesses in each province (see Table 6.4). Chiang Mai is the least diversified province with two forms of access – the SSRO office and its official branch. However, the branch is established regarding the SSO's regulation so the Chiang Mai SIBD pattern is not different from the uniform one. Lamphun with two accesses is slightly more diversified than Chiang Mai because of their interaction with the provincial governor. This interaction once originated an additional access to SIBD in Lamphun although it was terminated later on. Phrae with 31 accesses – 30 local organisations and the SSRO – is highly diversified because the CLO project appeared to be an initiative of SIBD. Indeed, the project was derived from the Nan SSRO's P&F but

the Phrae SSRO adapted it in response to local circumstances. Nan with 100 accesses – 99 local governments and the SSRO – is the most diversified province due to the P&F. Subsequently, there were another two projects developed from the P&F idea.

Table 5.11 Number of insured persons per access

Province	Number of Insured Persons	Number of Access	Insured persons/ access
National	9702833	96*	101071.18
Chiang Mai	178108	2	89054.00
Lamphun	78338	2	39169.00
Phrae	16479	31	531.58
Nan	12365	100	123.65

Source: Annual Statistics 2010, SSO website

\*Number of the SSO's official field offices in 75 provinces, accessed on 9 June 2012

Interestingly, considering the number of insured persons per access in each province reasserts the diversification degree in each province. First of all, it should be noted that the SSO has rarely considered the total number of service accesses nationwide. Although service expansion – e.g. the Mini Office scheme (Social Security Office, 2002) or the service expansion to banks or convenient stores (Social Security Office, 2009c)– was introduced to SIBD, the total number of accesses cannot be found in any acquired documents. Therefore, to estimate the national norms, simple calculation is applied. As a result, in Table 6.4, Nan is the case different from national norms the most, while Chiang Mai is the least.

The degree of diversification entails a different degree of local cooperation in each province. The number of service accesses reflects the extent to which local cooperation exists in the four provinces. In Nan, the highest diversified case, local cooperation involved all local governments in the province. Phrae is at the second highest degree of diversification and local cooperation. Although the CLO project covered all over the province (eight districts), only 30 out of 75 local governments participated. Also, although Lamphun is slightly more diversified than Chiang Mai in terms of SIBD, both of them are similar in terms of degree of local cooperation. Helps such as document distribution were requested of local governments indeed but

these are not considered as local cooperation in this research. Therefore, no local cooperation exists in either Chiang Mai or Lamphun.

#### *5.3.5.2 The SSRO's responsiveness*

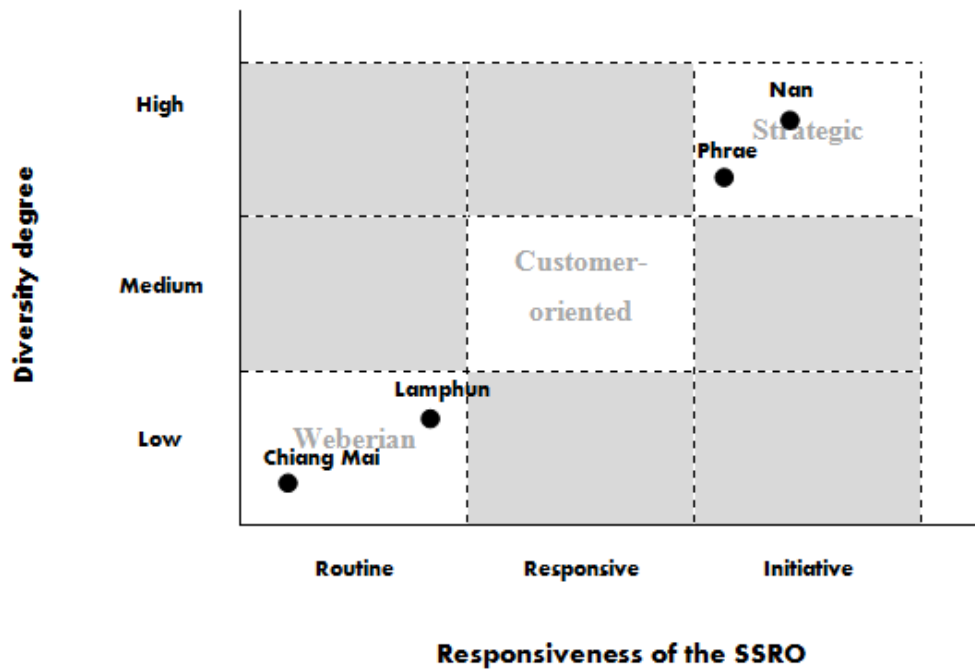
Further, while Section 5.1 classifies the SSRO regarding its coordinator role, this section classifies the SSRO as a decision maker of SIBD whose responsiveness is varied across provinces. Four selected SSROs are put into two categorizations: an initiative delivery agency (Phrae and Nan) and a routine delivery agency (Chiang Mai and Lamphun). In Phrae and Nan, the SSROs are classified as initiative delivery agencies since they exercised local cooperation projects which bore characteristics of responsiveness and creativity. The Nan's P&F makes the case more diversified from the standardized pattern of SIBD than Phrae. Compared to the Phrae SSRO's CLO project, the P&F is more established in terms of sustainability (sequel projects, length of time) and facilities provided for cooperating organisations (devolved authorities, specific advisors). Also, the Nan SSRO attempted to maintain and/or strengthen local network by periodically gave them other tasks. This could possibly remind them of the existing connection with the SSRO. In contrast, in Chiang Mai and Lamphun neither responsive nor initiative projects were evidently operated by the SSROs. The GCS project which was originally hypothesised as a responsive project of the SSRO turned out to be a response to the Governor's request rather than local needs. Therefore, although the Lamphun SSRO had participated in the GCS project, such activities cannot be considered as a 'responsive project'.

#### *5.3.5.3 Classifying cases into diversification patterns*

Despite three patterns of SIBD – Weberian, customer-oriented, strategic – presented earlier, four selected provinces are compliant with only two patterns (see Figure 5.17). Firstly, Chiang Mai and Lamphun falls on the Weberian pattern (low diversity, routine characteristic) as they rigorously implement the SSO's policy. Secondly, Phrae and Nan falls on the strategic pattern (high diversity, initiative characteristic) as they initiated newly and responsively project of SIBD (CLO and P&F respectively). It should be emphasised that these data from four selected provinces

exemplify the extent to which the diversity of service delivery not the diversity of entitlement or coverage exists across provinces. This diversity of SIBD occurs when the SSROs attempt to innovatively deliver social insurance benefits. While Nan portrays the most diversified pattern of SIBD, Chiang Mai is the least. Four intra-organisational factors of the SSRO's responsiveness – provincial strategy, leadership, participation, customer-oriented value – are believed to be influential on the diversity. These factors facilitate the SSRO's innovations resulting in initiative projects which diversify SIBD pattern.

Figure 5.16 Diversity of SIBD in Thailand



## Conclusion

In a province, social insurance institution comprises three actor constellations including: provincial SIA (AC1), project management (AC2), and ProA (AC3). Two substantial constellations (AC1, AC2) are discussed in Section 5.1 to depict roles of provincial actors. Being obliged, selected, or coerced into SIBD, provincial actors are rarely active. An advisory board (the PSSS) seldom provided advices on SIBD decision-making. Most PSSS members similarly claimed that SIBD is not their direct



responsibility. Similarly, project participants play insignificant roles in SIBD. Evidence of their activeness in SIBD was not found in the fieldwork. Section 5.2 discusses inter-organisational relations in two respects: resource dependence and degree of collaboration. In terms of resource dependence, the governor and local organisation – are the most prominent actor to be influential in SIBD. The external office could also be as influential as the two actors depending on the SSRO's activity. However, their influence varies across provinces so that it could not be simply generalized. In terms of the degree of collaboration, Nan appears to be the most collaborative case compared to other cases while Phrae has a moderately high degree, Lamphun with a moderately low degree and Chiang Mai with a low degree of collaboration.

Diversity of SIBD is seen across the four selected provinces. Chiang Mai is the case in which SIBD pattern resembles the uniform pattern of SIBD. Likely, high political tensions restrict the Chiang Mai SSRO's performance and innovation. In Lamphun, with the GCS project, SIBD pattern seems slightly diversified from national norms. However, its responsiveness is not from local needs but hierarchical pressure from the governor. Politically, although national politician recommended his accomplice to the PSSS selection, the tension in Lamphun is not as high as in Chiang Mai. Phrae is originally believed to be the most diversified case. Operating the CLO project, local organisations are involved in SIBD and consequently diversify SIBD pattern. Nan is found to be the most diversified case in which the SSRO has been running several initiatives, e.g. P&F, mobile branch, which involve all local governments and the LAO. In addition to the SSROs' innovations in both provinces, two brothers from Phrae occupied the position of employer representatives in Phrae and Nan. Without permission to interview, however, provincial politics in relation to SIBD interestingly remains in a black box.

Despite access difficulties that make the politics something of a black box for researchers, the next chapter reviews the available evidence on political and other explanations of inter-provincial diversity.

## **Chapter 6 : Explanations of Decentralisation, Collaboration and Diversity**

While Chapter 5 exhibits roles of provincial actors, their relationship patterns and the diversity of SIBD, this chapter further explains the diversity under the changing political context of Thailand. Ultimately, it aims to answer the central question of this research: *‘Is interprovincial diversity in SIBD caused by either or both a) the decentralisation policy in recent years or b) the relationship patterns between actors at provincial level?’* It firstly discusses particular context essential to SIBD decision-making (see Section 6.1) and highlights the impacts of the late 1990s decentralisation on the three administrative spheres – SIA, ProA, LoA – and particularly SIBD (see Section 6.2). Then, it examines the degree to which decentralisation impacts on SIBD in the four provinces (see Section 6.3). Lastly, it answers the question by explaining how decentralisation and collaboration differently impact the diversity of SIBD (see Section 6.4).

### **6.1 Diversification through Thailand’s political instabilities**

This research studies Thailand’s social insurance from its beginning in 1990 until 2011. Within these two decades, Thai politics has indeed changed along with its social and economic contexts. To discuss the change of social insurance in such a long time would need another chapter. However, this research concerns the diversity which had occurred after the late 1990s decentralisation only. This section thus discusses the diversification in accordance with political changes in Thailand from the late 1990s onwards. As discussed in Chapter 3, there are two key political changes in Thailand in recent decades: the 1997 People’s Constitution and Thaksinisation (see particularly Phongphaichit & Baker, 2004; McCargo, 2005). Despite the fact that these changes are substantial to Thailand’s development, it is found that such political changes barely influenced provincial SIBD.

#### **6.1.1 Influence of national politics on SIBD**

Political elites in Thai contemporary politics at the national level include: elected officials, bureaucrats (appointed officials in ministries and departments), and

business elites. Each of them could of course have an influence on SIBD decision-making somehow. Their power is usually perceived to reach as further as they want. However, SIBD seems to be out of their reach or even interest. Firstly, this research finds no evidence of national politicians', or elected officials' (MPs'), involvement in SIBD. There are two possible ways the MPs could have an effect on SIBD: direct contacts with the SSRO (or the PSSS) and their local connections with e.g. employers, employees. Although the SSO's regulation does not provide an opportunity for them to be a PSSS member, they could perhaps discuss any matter related to SIBD with the SSRO and this could be discussed in the PSSS meeting. Also, for example of local connections, MPs may know some *Chao Pho*, or being one himself/herself. These connections may help them build up pressures on the SSRO or PSSS somehow. However, in minutes of meetings from the four selected provinces, nothing in relation to MPs is found. No mentioning of them in any of the interviews either. This suggests that they are rarely involved in SIBD.

Moreover, politicians could also create pressures on the SSRO's policy through the parliament. However, no evidence is found to support this assumption. Many politicians are rarely interested in not only SIBD but also social insurance policy in general. In fact, the SSF is one of the biggest government funds and politicians attempt to take a portion of it for other purposes. However, SIBD are less attractive to them maybe because social insurance system is very hard to penetrate or intervene. With the SSC and the SSO in operation, it is not an easy piece of cake for them. Although labour movements have not been strong (Hewison & Brown, 1994), they have not been too weak to protect their rights in social security either. Every time politicians intended to take money out of the SSF, the response to such intention would rise. Thus, with the other piece of cake appearing in front of their eyes such as construction project, social insurance may be a maze where they do not want to get lost in or have trouble with.

Thaksin's influence in SIBD should also be particularly discussed because this research selects the North as its region of study where his family and cronies persist. In general, Thaksin made several changes to social welfare system in Thailand

during his premiership (2001-2006). According to Hewison (2010, p. 126), ‘as a middle-income country, the social welfare innovations that the Thaksin government implemented stand out as a remarkable achievement’. For example, a universal healthcare scheme (30-baht For All Diseases: *Sam Sib Baht Ruksa Tuk Rok*) was then launched and apparently appreciated by many of those without formal employers (Kwon, 2009). Thaksin also intended to extend social insurance coverage to informal labours but it was not accomplished within his second term ended by the 2006 coup. All of these, however, are issues of policy-making not implementation. SIBD is part of social insurance policy implementation. Neither documents nor interviews lead to the conclusion that Thaksin has ever put direct pressures on any of the selected SSROs. From observations, however, some signs of Thaksin’s cronies exist in the Chiang Mai SIBD (discussed further in the next section).

As the democratisation questionably goes on, Thailand has been on the rough path in which politics becomes a game of power not only between elites themselves but also with other interest groups e.g. the old and new middle class (see Section 3.2.1). Positively speaking, Thais become more aware and active in politics. Still, cronyism seems to get stronger in Thai politics, particularly in the Thaksinization period. Thus, some may think that Thaksin’s influence would reach as many aspects of people’s lives as he, or his cliques, wanted to. However, it is found that Thaksin was rarely involved or influential in SIBD. Nor were the MPs and business elites. Possibly, they have had a little interest on social insurance for several reasons e.g. low return of popularity or profit, or a relatively difficult process of intervention. It is worth noting that this is not to say that SIBD is apolitical. Nor does it say that social insurance in Thailand is free from pressure groups. Rather, what must be emphasised is that there are gaps between national politics and SIBD. The SIBD arena is indeed political but for some reason political elites (politicians and business alike) at the national level have rarely involved in it. As this research focuses on interactions within provinces, this interesting assumption may need to be further investigated in future research.

### 6.1.2 Money and power in provinces

As emphasised by many scholars (e.g. McVey, 2000; Phongphaichit & Baker, 2000), provincial politics could have been influential to SIBD decision-making. Particularly, those *Chao Pho* who are emerging dominators of provincial politics (Phongphaichit & Baker, 2000; Chantornvong, 2000; Ockey, 2000) may be influential in SIBD (see Section 3.2.1). Based on interviews and documents, this research finds that none of them, despite being PSSS members, are influential in SIBD decision-making. Seemingly, social insurance is not attractive to those with wealth, and sometimes power, in the province. To provincial business elites, participation in SIBD as members of PSSS is only for social honour (see Section 5.1). Still, whether such honour is really an incentive remains questionable.

Employer representatives in four selected provinces could be considered as *Chao Pho* in terms of their wealth in the province. In Phrae and Nan, the representatives are brothers from a billionaire family of East *Lanna*<sup>26</sup> (Manager Weekly, 2007). In Chiang Mai and Lamphun, they both bore the same surname and mostly worked in the same industry of construction<sup>27</sup>. Particularly, the Chiang Mai representative owns seven businesses with initial investment of 450 million baht (£9 million). All of the representatives, except Lamphun, are apparently engaged with public and private committees (for Phrae and Nan see Isra News, 2013; for Chiang Mai see Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna, undated).

In terms of political involvement, Chiang Mai is the most outstanding case of all four. As mentioned earlier, Thaksin's cronies seems connected with SIBD in Chiang Mai, the province in which Thaksin is undeniably and unsurprisingly well-connected. Chiang Mai is not only the most affluent province in the North but also the hometown of Thaksin's. He had been brought up in Chiang Mai until he graduated from his secondary school. His family is one of Chiang Mai elitist families. While his father is from Shinawatra, a wealthy silk-business family; his mother is a daughter of Princess Juntip, a descendant of the Chiang Mai Governor in 1816-1822

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<sup>26</sup> Referred to an ancient kingdom located in the North of Thailand.

<sup>27</sup> Sahamitr Inter Engineering belongs to the CM representative and Nakornping Yothakan construction company belongs to the LP representative.

(Wanlaya, 2013). Many of his political parties' committees are from Chiang Mai and one of the interviewees, EmR2, was once one of the Phue Thai Party's (PTP's) committees in 2008. Interestingly, EmR2 is also a member of Chiang Mai PSSS and one of those employers who have not paid for SI contributions for a while (interview, EmE1, 29 December 2011).

Ironically, while the SSRO chief strongly aimed to deal with contribution evasion (interview, 3 October 2011), EmR2 was still appointed into the PSSS. In the interview (23 December 2011), he stated that he was 'invited (*chern*)' by the SSRO to be a PSSS member because he had been working with many other committees e.g. Aeronautical Radio of Thailand's committee, Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna's committee. According to the PSSS minutes, however, he rarely appeared in the meetings. Moreover, during the interview, he seemingly suggests that he would rather find an alternative way to pay for his company's SI contributions. For instance, he mentioned that his company completed road constructions for the government but he had not received the payment yet. Thus, this unpaid amount should have been credited to his company so that he could use the credit to pay for the contributions. However, this suggestion was not in the CMPSSS minutes nor mentioned by any of the CMPSSS members.

An interesting question relates to what he has done and will do in order to keep this status quo (the situation in which he is not paying the contribution and still appointed as a PSSS member). It is difficult to find hard evidence to answer this question. However, the LPSSRO chief's comment on his tenure at the CMSSRO shed some lights on it (interview, 22 February 2011). He mentioned the intense politics in Chiang Mai and stated the deterioration of his health as the reason of self-relocation to the LPSSRO. Also, the CM Deputy Governor depicts her task in Chiang Mai under the local 'compromise (*prani pranom*)' culture (interview, 23 December 2011). In addition to the fact that the EmR2 was once the PTP's committee and has an ex-MP brother, it is likely that the negotiation on employer's contribution payment will take a long time, if ever, to settle.

Provincial (members of Provincial Council: MPCs) and local politicians (members of Municipality Council: MMCs; and members of SAO Council: MSAOCs) are also in the provincial money and power game. For the candidates, one will likely be elected if they are from affluent or elitist family (Haque, 2010, p.684). However, neither of them has outstanding presence in SIBD decision-making. To local politicians, SIBD seems to be out of their interests unless they receive request from the SSRO. Unsurprisingly, they are more interested in social assistance benefit delivery (SABD) which is one of their responsibilities. Local politicians are involved in SIBD only when requested by the SSROs according to evidence in Phrae and Nan. To provincial politicians, evidence from the media only shows their cooperation with the SSRO as a healthcare service provider. For example, the Phuket PAO's hospital participated as a service provider in social insurance scheme (Daily News, 2012). Still, no evidence was found in the field.

### **6.1.3 Contemporary Thai bureaucracy**

Since the enactment of SSA in 1990, the Thai bureaucracy has been changed along with its political contexts. In recent decades, 'groups outside the state, business interests in particular, began to develop means of worming their way into the insular state (Unger, 1998, p.60)'. Consequently, as Arghiros (2001, pp. 20-21) summarises, '[I]t is evident that the rise of provincial businessmen-politicians has been at the expense of the power and control of the bureaucracy. It is now not unusual, for example, for politicians to have civil servants transferred at will - something unheard of until recently. ...while bureaucrats are either subordinate or in alliance with the new rural elite, the *jao pho* [*Chao Pho*] or local powers, relations between the rural majority and the state are largely unaltered.'

Thus, the Thai bureaucracy in provinces remains 'highly personalized rather than institutionalized, and loyalty and obedience within the rigidly hierarchical structure of the public service tend to be valued more than efficiency and productivity (Lim & World Bank., 1980, pp. 1-2)'. Also, as Morell and Samudavanija (1981, p. 48) indicates 'Thai bureaucrat ... views his position as his personal possession that can be used to advance his and his clique's interests. ... To fulfil the patronage needs,

transfers and promotions often involve breaching legal restrictions by appointing well-connected candidates without the required qualifications.’

The case of Chiang Mai reflects such characteristics of Thai provincial bureaucracy. Through the selection of employee representatives, nepotism appears to play its role. As mentioned earlier, EmR1 introduced EmE1 to a senior bureaucrat in Ministry of Labour (interview, EmE1, 29 December 2011). Later, he was appointed as the PSSS member although his formal employer was still ambiguous (according to the SSO’s regulation, an employee representative must be formally employed). Then, EmE1 brought EmE2 to the circle and EmE2 became another employee representative in the CMPSSS. This is contradict to what the CMSSRO chief stated that the selection of representatives was based on their performances in labour relations. With these observations, thus, one should bear in mind that bureaucratic politics in SIBD evidently plays its role in the representative selection more than during the decision-making process. In this selection process, they could reward those in their cliques.

#### **6.1.4 Local innovation**

To explore innovation inside government, Considine & Lewis (2007, p. 585) suggest that ‘the study needs to be able to show connections...between all the actors in the governmental system’. This research finds that the connections are barely influential in the extent of innovation. As discussed in Section 5.1, although a number of actors exist in provincial SIBD, only a few of them deliberately influence the decision-making. Rather, four intra-organisational factors of the SSRO are influential to the initiatives as part of the diversification of SIBD: SSRO’s strategy, the chief, intra-organisational participation, and customer-oriented value. The first factor is a provincial strategy designed by the SSRO. In Phrae and Nan, the SSROs drafted their own annual strategy based on the SSO’s strategy. This creates the room for initiative projects to be operated. Dissimilarly, in Chiang Mai and Lamphun the SSROs restricted themselves to the SSO’s strategy. This consequently discourages initiatives as there is no reminder or novel direction for the organisations.



Secondly, it is evident that the SSRO chiefs play important roles in the diversification of SIBD. As Agranoff & McGuire (2003, p. 30) indicate, 'variations...are related to local managers' perceived internal political and operational barriers'. Chiang Mai and Lamphun are cases where the chiefs seemingly knew the barriers but dealt with these either diplomatically or indifferently. Nan is the most interesting case where the SSRO chief seems to be the most influential, compared to other cases, to SIBD diversification. The chief took part, or made a decision, in every step of the P&F operation while bearing bureaucratic constraints in mind. Phrae is the case where the chief accredited his subordinate as the project innovator. Among four chiefs, he appears to be the most supportive and participative leader. This leads to the third influential factor, the SSRO's intra-organisational participation which appears in Phrae only. The Phrae SSRO seems to be a participative organisation in which the initiative project was brought on by the officials rather than the chief. At the beginning of the project, the project was driven by the front-office head and supported by the former chief. The current chief, although arrived after the CLO had been approved, also supported the operation and continuation of the CLO. This openness for creativity of any officials thus led to the novel CLO project which diversified the pattern of SIBD in Phrae.

Lastly, customer-oriented value plays important role in the SSRO's responsiveness. In Phrae and Nan, the chiefs and the heads in both SSROs emphasised that the journey to the office was somewhat difficult to insured persons in remote area. Therefore, they created the distinctive projects which inevitably diversified SIBD pattern. Differently, in Lamphun and Chiang Mai, such value cannot be found. It was not mentioned in interviews with the Lamphun SSRO. In Chiang Mai, although the chief mentioned the 'maternity benefit payment on the patient's bed (*jay-kha-klod-kaang-tieng*)', this idea is based on the need of clients in general. It is not specifically a response to Chiang Mai's local needs.

## 6.2 Decentralisation impacts on SIBD

Since the late 1990s, two approaches of administration – NPM and GG – have become important concepts of Thai administration particularly because of international organisations' aid conditions after the 1997 economic crisis and the 1997 Constitution (Bowornwatthana, 2000). Laws, regulations, plans related to administrative reform were inaugurated in compliance with the two approaches. For example, the Eighth National Economic and Social Development Plan (1997-2001) 'outlined the remedies [of state capacity problems]: administrative downsizing and reorganisation; shifting the role of government services from inspection and control to directing, supervising and facilitating; improving the administrative systems of central agencies at the ministerial and departmental levels; decentralising public administrative authority and delegating decision-making authority; and budgeting reforms to allow for freer and more flexible budget administration (summarised in Painter, 2006, p. 31)'. These, as a result, forced all government agencies, including the SSO, into administrative decentralisation.

This section sets a framework to discuss the changes in provincial SIBD occurred after the late 1990s decentralisation. To achieve this, differences of SIBD between before and after the late 1990s decentralisation are portrayed in two dimensions: authority and resource. Undeniably, decentralisation can be measured in a number of criteria (Conyers, 1983, p. 103). This research selects two major criteria – authority (political), resource (fiscal) – to examine the extent to which decentralisation has been planned and to cross-examine decentralisation between the two criteria. As Conyers (1983, p. 103) states, '[I]t is...important to recognize that...a system which is 'more decentralised' according to one criterion may be 'less decentralised' according to another'.

It is essential to indicate two key points preceding the following discussion. Firstly, in this research, each key actor's authority and power in the post-decentralisation administration are to be analysed. However, the distinction between both terms is still ambiguous as they are closely interrelated. As Vrooman (2009, p. 62) suggests, 'authority is power or influence that in the mutual relationships of actors is accepted

as proper [underlined by the researcher to emphasise the definition]’. Differently, Hague and Harrop (2010, p. 11) states that ‘authority is a broader concept than power. Where power is the capacity to act, authority is the acknowledged right to do so’. This distinction could be complimented by Aghion and Tirole’s work (1997, p. 1) which classifies authority within organisations into ‘formal (the right to decide)’ and ‘real (the effective control over decisions)’ authority. Apparently, the former is ‘authority’ while the latter is ‘power’.

This research thus accepts the ambiguity of authority/power distinction and develops the discussion under the term ‘authority’. As Chapter 3 discusses each actor’s legitimate right to act; this chapter discusses further on the capacity of decision-making (power) either in the key actor’s perception or implementation. Specifically, this chapter not only discusses the power but also exhibits the gap between authority (acknowledgement of right) and power (capacity to act) found in the fieldwork. ‘Authority’ is defined as ‘a right to demand obedience on the party holding the authority and a duty to obey on those of subordinate rank (Vrooman, 2009, p. 62)’.

In this section, two situations, before and after the late 1990s decentralisation, are compared to portray a national phenomenon of pre/post decentralisation. Besides social insurance administration (SIA), two more administrative spheres – provincial administration (ProA), local administration (LoA) – are of concern as they are related to SIBD. Three subsections are thus presented regarding three decentralisation fields: the SSO and the SSRO in SIA (Section 6.2.1); the governor in ProA (Section 6.2.2); and, local government in LoA (Section 6.2.3). Lastly, Section 6.2.4 discusses the impacts on SIBD in particular.

### **6.2.1 Social insurance administration: changes in the SSO-SSRO relation**

Before the late 1990s decentralisation, provincial SIBD had been carried out in traditional bureaucratic style. The SSO designed policies hierarchically and the SSRO followed and implemented all policies rigidly. For example, in the first Social Security Plan (1992-1996), it is emphasised that the SSO needed to be settled while

nothing related to administrative decentralisation is mentioned. Also, the SSRO's authorities were vaguely specified in Ministerial Regulation Concerning the Organisation of the SSO (1992) as: '(1) perform and coordinate under policies, programmes, and projects concerning duties and responsibilities of the SSO in the province; (2) report the result of monitoring and evaluation under policies, programmes, and projects to the Labour Office; (3) cooperate or support the performance of other organisations related to and being assigned'.

Subsequently, this changed after the late 1990s decentralisation. To examine the degree to which the SSO decentralises their authority to the SSRO, the quantitative content analysis method was employed. Five documents related to the SSO's long-term plans were studied to search for the frequency of the term 'decentralisation' is mentioned in each five-year strategy (Social Security Office, 1992, 1996, 2002, 2009c, 2010). Apparently, the greater frequency of the term being stated, the more important decentralisation is to SIA. Interestingly, the term does not exist at all in the first (1992-1996), third (2002-2006) and fourth (2005-2009) five-year strategies; while it exists in the second (1997-2001) and fifth (2010-2014) strategies (see Table 6.1). Seemingly, the SSO emphasises the decentralisation only right after the late 1990s pressure of administrative reform in the second strategy and recently in the fifth plan. This definitely raises the question of their actual intention about decentralisation in SIA.

Table 6.1 Frequency of the key term being used in the SSO's five-year plans

Relevant terms	1 <sup>st</sup> 5-year Strategy (1992-96)	2 <sup>nd</sup> 5-year Strategy (1997-2001)	3 <sup>rd</sup> 5-year Strategy (2002-06)	4 <sup>th</sup> 5-year Strategy (2005-09)	5 <sup>th</sup> 5-year Strategy (2010-14)
<i>Kaan-kra-jaai-um-naat</i> (decentralisation)	0	5	0	0	15
<i>Mob-um-naat</i> (deconcentration)	0	0	0	0	2

However, it is evident that authorities are devolved from the SSO to the SSRO. According to the document given by the SSO's Director-General during an interview, the authorities were devolved to the SSRO (see Table 6.2). This document

was produced as a summary of the discussion between the SSO and 71 participating SSROs (from 76 SSROs in total) on the decentralisation within social insurance system. Interestingly, it shows ‘already devolved’ and ‘newly devolved’ authorities between the SSO and the SSRO. Apparently, the SSRO is gaining more authorities as 24 authorities are already devolved and six authorities are newly devolved.

Still, there are two emerging issues to be noted with this document. Firstly, unfortunately, the cover letter of this document was not given so that the exact date on which this discussion took place is unknown. However, presumably, it could be produced in 2010 since part of the document is labeled ‘สจบ.53’. This ‘สจบ’ label denotes that some data in this document belongs to the Division of Promotion of Provincial Administration, Provincial Administration Development and Promotion Bureau, Ministry of Interior. Also, regarding the two digits (53), it was possibly produced in 2010 (B.E.2553). Secondly, as a result of unidentifiable date, it is still unclear when the ‘already exist’ and ‘newly proposed’ authorities were devolved. It is possible; however, that the newly proposed authorities were perhaps devolved a year before 2010 and the already exist authorities were devolved before that. Nonetheless, despite such ambiguity, this document is crucial as it portrays the trajectory of increasingly devolved authorities in social insurance system.

In conclusion, the SSRO, a field office of SIA, gains more autonomy after the late 1990s decentralisation because the amendment of Constitution in 1997 emphasises administrative decentralisation. Subsequently, laws and regulations are enacted to implement such decentralisation. Also, as shown in Table 6.2, 30 authorities are increasingly devolved from the SSO to the SSROs until 2010. Also, these devolved authorities imply the expectedly decreasing control of the SSO over the SSRO. In principle, the SSO is supposed to perform a role of coordinator or mentor for the SSROs.

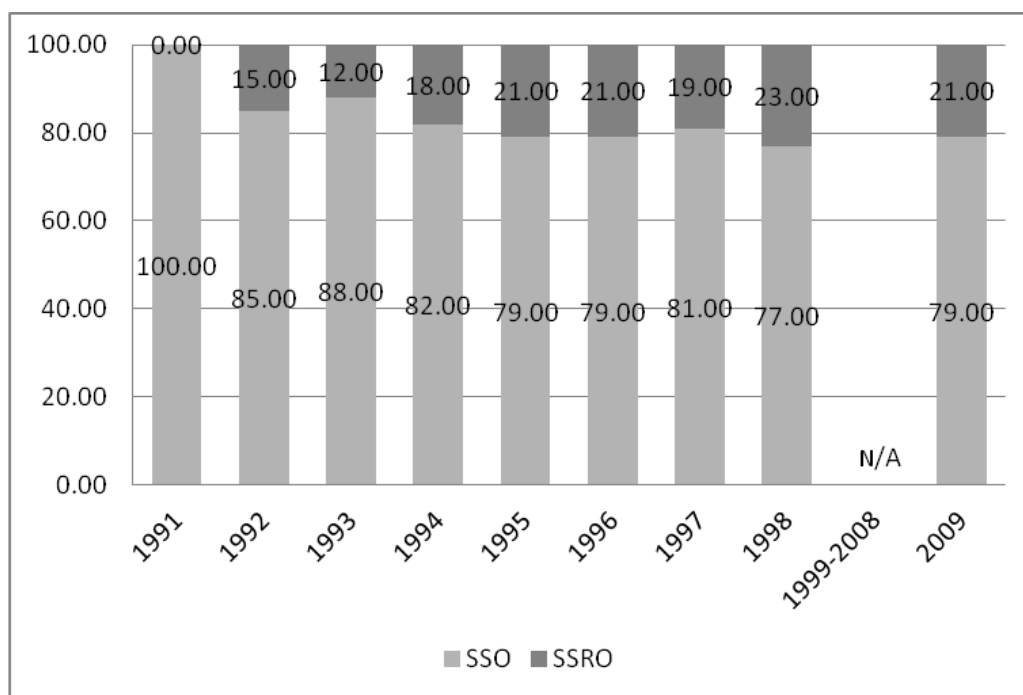
Table 6.2 List of authorities devolved to the SSROs\*

No.	Devolved authorities/responsibilities	Short title**	Already devolved	Newly proposed
1	Updating insured persons database	Database	√	
2	Registry of beginning and ending of entitlement	registry1	√	
3	Registry of insured persons under Article 39 and 40	registry2	√	
4	Contribution refund determination and cash transfer	finance1		√
5	Waiving employer's debt related to social insurance	finance2	√	
6	Issuing documents of contribution estimation and salary declaration	document1	√	
7	Updating account and financial report	finance3	√	
8	Disbursement of SSF for social insurance administration	finance4	√	
9	Trading outdated or out-of-use materials	inventory1	√	
10	Receiving officially donated cash or gift	finance5	√	
11	Inventory and budget management	inventory2	√	
12	Approval of operation and spending regarding the Ministry of Finance's regulations	finance6	√	
13	Benefit payment via bank transfer	payment1		√
14	Benefit payment to non-Thailand domiciled insured/entitled persons	payment2		√
15	Authorization of SSF spending at the SSRO	payment3	√	
16	Providing information on contribution calculation for employers	info1		√
17	Providing information on employee's work injury for employers	info2		√
18	Expansion of benefit claiming period and appeal	law1	√	
19	Issuing entitlement card	entitle1	√	
20	Special health service determination	entitle2	√	
21	Authorizing the PSSS in disability benefit determination	law2	√	
22	Seizure and trading properties and processing the prosecution	law3	√	
23	Prosecuting illegal cash cheque	law4	√	
24	Prosecuting crimes	law5	√	
25	Commissioning an investigation committee in case of official's violation	law6	√	
26	Issuing ID card of officials	hr1	√	
27	Organizing seminars to disseminate social insurance information and knowledge	info3	√	
28	Providing domestic travel expenses of seminar attendants	finance7	√	
29	Human resource development in the SSRO	hr2		√
30	Devolution of human resource management	hr3	√	
	Total number		24	6

\* Self-constructed based on the data from the Official document of 'Opinions towards devolved authorities' (SSO, 2010)

\*\* shortened by the author

Figure 6.1 Percentage of resource sharing between the SSO and the SSROs



Source: 1991-1998 from Hanbenjapong (1999, p. 15); 2009 from Social Security Office (2008b)

Despite the pressure of administrative reform, the proportion of resource sharing in SIA has slightly changed (see Figure 6.1) but insufficiently to add the degree of change into the analysis. In 1991, the year after the enactment of SSA and the establishment of social insurance in Thailand, 100% of budget went to the SSO since its regional setting was under development. Then, from 1992 to 1998, the total regional budget gradually but inconsistently increased from 15 to 23%. Unfortunately, the data in 1999-2008 are inaccessible, so the pattern of change cannot be perfectly drawn<sup>28</sup>. However, based on 2009 data, it is possible that regional budget remains similar to the one before the late 1990s decentralisation.

<sup>28</sup> The data in 1999-2008 are found in other format which is incomparable to this set of data (1991-1998, 2009). Also, the researcher tried requesting the missing data from the SSO directly but the request has not been answered.

### **6.2.2 Provincial administration: stronger provincial governor**

Thailand's provincial administration has been studied less than central or local administration. This could possibly be because ProA was 'simply an extension of the central administration, especially the Interior Ministry in Bangkok (Krongkaew, 1995, p. 356)'. Also, Charoenmuang (2010) suggests that 'while local governments would be more responsive to local problems; the governor 'always moves here and there [across provinces], needs to concentrate on national politics, and waits for order [from the upper hierarchy]. Local problems are swept under the carpet. [The governor] need not to get tired [in problem-solving] because s/he will not stay long'. Bearing these discussions and criticisms in mind, this section still considers provincial governor to have important roles in SIBD in the province due to her/his authorities and the resources increased under the Integrative Provincial Administration policy (IPA).

Before the decentralisation, the governor's authorities were only related to day-to-day work or, in other words, 'the basic power to oversee overall operations of ProA (Krongkaew, 1995, p. 346)'. Despite her/his traditional roles, the governor's authorities had always been questioned whether this position should be more decentralised (Dhamrongrachanupap Institute, 2000), elected (CharoenMuang, 1994; Lertpaitoon, 1997), or remain the same (overall see Wirachnipawan, 1998). However, with the failure of proposals to elect governors directly in 1990s due to the MoI official's resistance (see CharoenMuang, 1994; CharoenMuang, 2010), ProA had remained the same until the Thaksinization (2001-2006). As soon as the IPA was implemented in 2003, however, these issues have been less discussed. Rather, two forms of the IPA – the CEO governor and provincial strategy – have been more of focus in provincial administrative reform.

Politically, IPA was the policy of Thaksin who would like to maintain total control over provincial and local government. Therefore, he transformed provincial governors to be his CEOs in order to make sure that ProA would be under his control. This was done under the disguise of the IPA policy. As Painter (2006, p. 39) states, '[T]he CEO-governor scheme was clearly consistent with the overall design of



centralisation of executive power'. However, in 2008, the IPA focus shifted from empowering the provincial governor to integrated provincial strategic planning leading to the re-decentralisation of regional administration. The CEO policy, a provincial governor as Chief Executive Official of the province, was terminated and strategic planning became a major concern of all provincial offices. While her/his authorities remain the same as officially stated in 2003; the discretionary budget was transformed into provincial strategy budget.

Consequently, under the IPA policy, the governor arguably has gained more power and been granted a discretionary budget for ProA. This empowerment can be explained in, generally, ProA and, specifically, SIBD (see Appendix 3). In general, it is argued that the governor usually plays no role in ProA. No matter how strong s/he becomes; it is inconsequential to the administration. However, it is evident that the governor plays an important role in the administration at provincial level (Dhamrongrachanupap Institute, 2009). Further, the provincial governor is empowered under the Decree of Good Governance which was inaugurated in 2003. The subsequent 2003 Office of Prime Minister's Regulation on Integrated ProA specified more on her/his new roles.

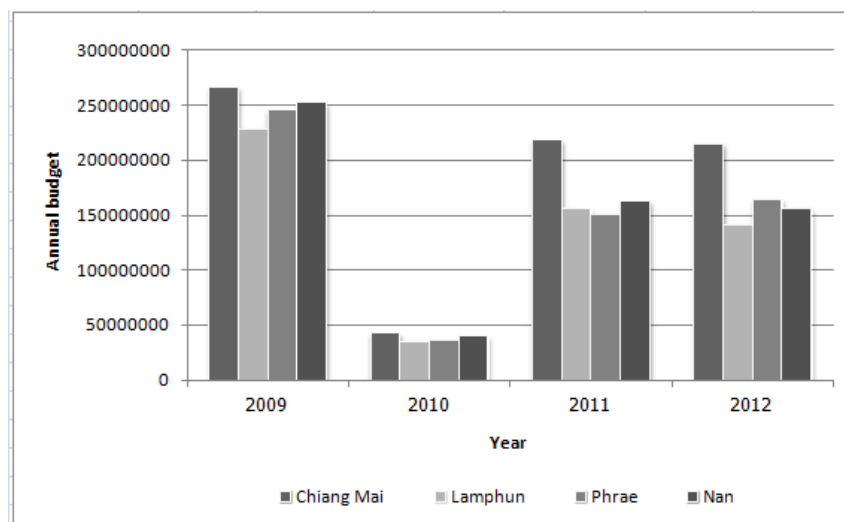
Specifically, the late 1990s decentralisation empowers provincial governor in SIBD. In the SSO's official document, the governor is authorised by the SSO in 10 aspects. In brief, all devolved authorities are related to personnel management rather than budget administration. This means that the governor is able to intervene in provincial social insurance administration only if it is a matter of personnel administration. Meanwhile, the SSRO is still fully authorised on financial matters of the provincial SIBD. Thus, although the governor's authorities in SIBD are increased in principle, it is doubtful how this is actually implemented.

Data in Appendix 3 are only based on selected documents. In fact, tremendous number of laws, regulations, and orders are related to provincial governors' authorities. For example, it was claimed that 'the governor is responsible for 156 laws, 189 regulations and 47 orders (Dhamrongrachanupap Institute, 2000, p. 90)'. However, it is not a purpose of this research to review these legal documents. Rather,

the governor's roles are main interest. Therefore, each document cited in Appendix 3 is selected because it provides extensive review of the pre-decentralisation governor's roles (Dhamrongrachanupap Institute, 2000) and the guiding principles of the post-decentralisation governor's roles (SSO's and DPPA's documents).

The governor's resource is increased over three periods: pre-decentralisation, Thaksinization, and post-2008. Before the late 1990s decentralisation, the governor's resource was mainly allocated through the MoI. S/he had limited power over the resource as '...the governor is authorised to propose budget to related ministries only while [s/he] has no authority in administering centrally-allocated budget (Dhamrongrachanupap Institute, 2000, p. 108)'. After the IPA initiated by Thaksin, it was claimed that 'the CEO governor scheme [provided] the [central] government with a direct channel for allocating funds to projects and districts, rather than relying on the more disaggregated, departmental budgetary system (Painter, 2006, p. 39)'. In other words, the central government directed money to the governor so that s/he could spend it on provincial projects regarding her/his discretion. Although the money to each governor, notably, was not widely publicized, it definitely increased the governor's resource for ProA.

Figure 6.2 Provincial budget in selected provinces, 2009-2012



Source: Bureau of Budget (website, accessed on 12 October 2012)

After Thaksin was ousted in 2006, the ‘CEO Governor’ term was not of use any longer. Still, the governors remained empowered under the revised IPA policy which was implemented in 2008. Similar to the CEO policy, the governor is still able to relocate or reward provincial bureaucrats at certain levels. Differently, in the revised IPA, the governor can grant financial resources to provincial offices through annual provincial strategy instead of the CEO governor’s discretion. Precisely, the provincial budget has become less discretionary. The previous CEO budget has been transformed into provincial strategy budget or ‘provincial budget’ (see Figure 6.2<sup>29</sup>). Also, a province under the 2008 IPA policy has become a legal body able to receive budget; while, originally, it was just administrative territory.

In conclusion, the governor’s authority and resource increased as a result of the IPA policy. Although this policy has been changing over time regarding political changes, the governor’s authorities and resources being devolved is unlikely to be decreased (2010 is an exceptional case<sup>30</sup>). Therefore, it is suffice to say that the governor has become stronger in both dimensions.

### **6.2.3 Local administration: autonomous local government**

Historically, local governments have existed in Thailand even before the political reform in 1932. Early form of local governments, ‘*Su-kha-pi-baan* (Sanitation District)’, was established nationwide in 1908 with three major authorities: sanitation, epidemic control, and transportation (see Sanitation District Act 1908). Then, several forms of local governments were set up under several legislations e.g. *Tetsaban* (municipality), and *Sa-pha-tumbon* (Sub-district Council) in 1933 and 1956 respectively. While various forms exist; local governments remained significant in Thai administration are mostly municipalities and Sub-district Administrative Organisations (SAOs). Provincial Administrative Organisation, an elected provincial government, also exists as local government (regarding decentralisation principle).

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<sup>29</sup> The 2010 budget (October 2010 – September 2011) is low because of the political turmoil intensified from April 2010 until the general election on July 3, 2011. Such period is crucial for drafting government budget but as the then government was about to leave the office it is common in Thailand that all processes are frozen.

<sup>30</sup> The provincial budget in 2010 is much lower than the other year presumably because of political turmoil started in 2009 which affected the government’s planning process.

However, under the same territory (province), their powers are limited under the provincial governor as ‘all of their projects and budgets must be approved by the provincial governor resulting in legitimate control and coercion of which the PAO chief must defer [*greng-jai* or literally translated ‘be courteous’] to the provincial governor (CharoenMuang, 2010)’. Thus, only municipalities and the SAOs will be referred to as ‘local governments’ throughout this dissertation. In this section, it is argued that local governments have become relatively autonomous after the late 1990s through increased authorities and resources.

Despite its long-term existence, local government has never been authorised or assigned to directly take part in SIBD. The most-related responsibility seems to be social assistance benefit (SAB) delivery. Seemingly, since local governments are perceived by regional governments as inferior organisations due to their responsibility, authority, and capacity (Puang-Ngam, 2000); it is likely that either local politicians or bureaucrats are negligible in the SSRO’s perception. However, as some SSROs have decided to cooperate with local governments in delivering the SIBs, it is still possible that local governments become involved in SIBD.

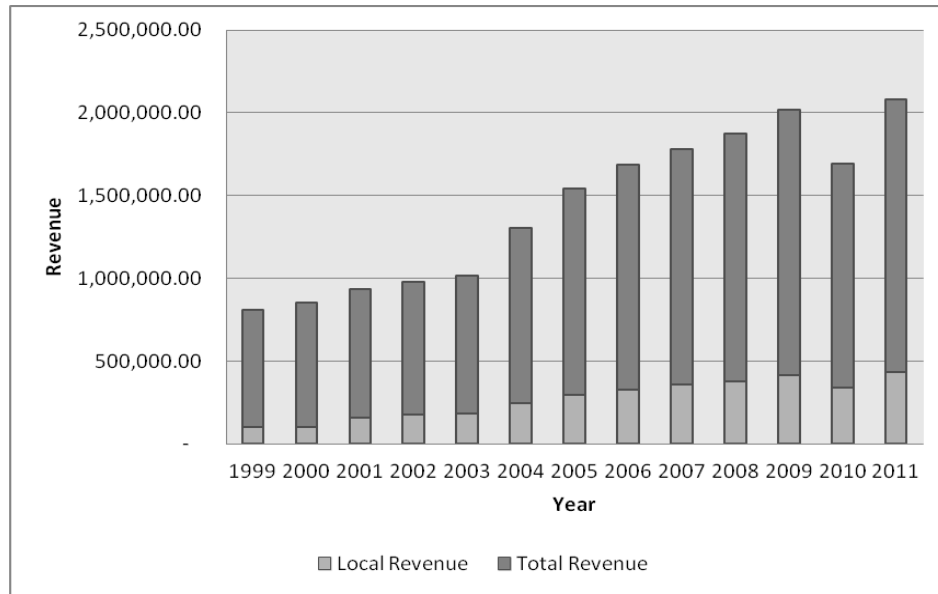
Authorities and resources of local governments increased after the decentralisation. Before the late 1990s decentralisation, local governments had been authorised nine responsibilities and duties (see Part 3, Sub-district Council and Sub-district Administrative Organisation Act, 1994). However, they still lacked powers in self-administration as political power was concentrated on appointed government officials (Harding & Leyland, 2011, p. 129). This form of central control did ‘not allow full freedom to local administrations to experiment with self-government, to manage their own local affairs and to cater for the true needs of the local people (Krongkaew, 1995, p. 345)’. For example, ‘*Tetsaban*, established in 1933, *Sukhaphibaan*, established in 1952, and PAOs, established in 1955, were controlled by appointed government officials particularly district chiefs and provincial governors (CharoenMuang, 2010)’. In brief, the Thai government had encouraged decentralisation in principle but it was not implemented in practice as they claimed

that full administrative autonomy of local government would cause inefficiency in LoA (Krongkaew, 1995, p. 345).

Eventually, after the Constitution was amended in 1997, pressure on the central government to decentralise their authorities to either sub-national governments or the third sector increased. Then, in 1999, the Plan and Process of Decentralisation Act (PPDA) was inaugurated and became a fundamental guideline of localization. Regarding this act, there are 31 authorities mandated as responsibilities and authorities of local governments (see Appendix 3). In terms of SIBD, there is no specific document for devolving the SSO's or the SSRO's to local governments. However, based on the selected data in Appendix 3, local governments are now authorised for SIBD-related functions more than before. For instance, their authorities appear to be expanded from support for women, children, elderly and disabled to the wider social assistance and public health. These expectedly enable them to get involved more in SIBD.

Similar to authorities, resources of local governments are increased after the decentralisation. According to the Plan and Process of Decentralisation Act 1999, the central government is obliged to devolve not only authority but also budget to local governments. After 1999, local governments' revenue has been increasing as the central government is expected to grant at least 35% of their revenue to local governments. Although it has not been achieved yet as only 26.14% is allocated to local governments, the tendency is apparently increasing (see Figure 6.3, Table 6.3).

Figure 6.3 Local and total revenue (Thai Baht), 1999-2011



Source: The National Municipal League of Thailand

Table 6.3 Local government's revenue (% of total government revenue)

Year	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
%	13.8	13.3	20.6	21.8	22.1	22.7	23.5	24.0	25.1	25.2	25.8	25.2	26.1

Source: The National Municipal League of Thailand

With these available authorities and resources, local governments could arguably be alternative resource providers for the SSRO. It might be questioned whether the autonomy of local governments should be considered as potential impact on SIA. Ostensibly, local governments are excluded from SIBD as their roles have barely been mentioned in the literature of social insurance in Thailand. However, they are still considered as potential service providers in the provincial administration of social insurance. For instance, if they agree to cooperate with the SSRO, a channel of the SSRO's benefit delivery will be expanded to local organisations' offices. This, for example, is explicitly shown in the CLO project where the cooperation between some volunteer local governments and the Phrae SSRO enhanced service accesses of SIBD.

#### **6.2.4 Central-local tensions and dependence after decentralisation**

As discussed in Chapter 3, it is believed that the late 1990s decentralisation affects provincial SIBD in Thailand in four respects: more responsive delivery agencies, a stronger provincial governor, more autonomous local governments, and less-controlling SSO. In other words, the SSRO, the governor, and local governments gained more powers after the late 1990s decentralisation. Meanwhile, undeniably, the SSO, which is obligated to pursue administrative decentralisation, had become less controlling over the SSRO. They were also impacted by the late 1990s decentralisation. Thus, such changes occurred to the four actors, listed as key actors in Thailand's decentralised SIA, and are considered as impacts of the decentralisation. This section therefore clarifies decentralisation impacts on SIA in more detail.

Originally, SIA at the provincial level was supposed to remain in uniformity. All field offices were expected to follow the central policy. The implementation might be slightly different in a small detail but the pattern of service provision in general was alike. However, after the late 1990s, strategic planning was applied to Thai bureaucracy in general and, then, social insurance administrative system was unavoidably changed. Specifically, delivery agencies were encouraged to change the pattern of SIBD from self-centric to customer-oriented. Still, although the concept was officially applied to the administrative system, it rather brought on a superficial change. The central department still believed that field offices need to pursue the goals and objectives they designed. Consequently, the social insurance administrative system generally remained centralised and non-responsive with a limited number of delivery agencies providing tailor-made services.

Decentralisation is proved to have impacts on three key actors (SSRO, governor, local government). Evidently, the three actors had likely implemented decentralised authority. Such actions appeared in the forms of initiative and responsiveness. This may result in the SSRO's increased autonomy from the SSO and alternative resources from the governor and local government. This section then argues for such changes after the decentralisation. It discusses on two factors including: central-local

tensions and alternative resource providers. The following discussions provide evidence to verify H1 as stated below.

H1: The more decentralised the governor and local government are;  
the more autonomous the SSRO becomes.

Apparently, there are two issues – local autonomy, resource dependence – in this hypothesis. Firstly, discussions on decentralisation are undeniably related to local autonomy (e.g. Bardhan & Mookherjee, 2007; Dreher, 2006; Hutchcroft, 2001; Peters, 2001; Pierre & Peters, 2000; Smith, 1985). On one hand, autonomy could be defined as ‘freedom to participate, which requires provision of the opportunities and the resources to participate in economic, social and political life (Cass, 1991, p. 17)’. On the other hand, as Ellison (1998) suggests, it must not be understood as ‘independence from political oversight (p.40)’ but it is instead ‘rooted in the ability of a government agency to perform its functions without interference from other governments (p.42)’. Therefore, being ‘more autonomous’ means that the SSRO could perform their functions more freely with less intervention from the SSO. Still, according to Pierre and Peters (2000), it should be noted that the transfer of power between different government levels is not necessarily a zero-sum game. As they indicate, ‘by granting more powers and autonomy to ... subnational governments, the state loses some of its control but not as much as subnational governments increase their control (p.78)’.

Secondly, this section takes Provan’s assumption (1984, p. 499) stating that resource dependence reflects ‘the capacity to influence’ because it is ‘a measure of potential power and influence over decisions refers to enacted power’. While the governor and local government could be an alternative resource provider, the SSRO’s dependence on the SSO’s resource tends to decrease. In this case, less resource dependence on the SSO induces greater autonomy of the SSRO.

#### *6.2.4.1 Central-local tensions: pressure, compliance and resistance*

An increase of local autonomy apparently creates changes, particularly tensions, in central-local relations. While subnational units enjoy local autonomy, central



authority may still attempt to maintain their control over these units (Davies, 1968; Gent, 2001; Pierre & Peters, 2000; Smith, 1985; Wond & Macaulay, 2010). Thus, the relations between national and sub-national governments always operate under constraints and tensions. Saunders (1995, p. 56) states that studying central-local relations involves an analysis of local autonomy and constraints. Since central government is likely to claim its responsibility and concern over local service delivery, this sometimes brings the 'sense of distrust' on the surface (Goldsmith & Newton, 1983). As a result, intergovernmental relations involves more than 'zero-sum conflict (Pierson, 1995, p. 458)'.

Tensions between central and local can be viewed either political or bureaucratic. A comprehensive analysis of political tensions is proposed by Saunders (1982). He employs three criteria of central-local relations: economic function (economic versus social policy priorities), mode of interest mediation (rational discretion versus democratic accountability), and ideological principle (profit versus need). The former term in each bracket is of the central view; the latter the local. Added to this analysis, bureaucratic tension occurs when either resources or authority is not, or insufficiently, allocated from the central to the local. Andrew and Schroeder (2003) indicate that national-level bureaucracy attempt to maintain control over resources, particularly fiscal resource, which will be allocated to local. In Walker's analysis (2005), tensions between central and local could possibly occur when the authority in policy design is not devolved despite the fact that funding is granted or not. In short, this section discusses bureaucratic tension rather than political tension.

A result of tensions could be either positive or negative depending on its direction: horizontal or vertical. If horizontal tensions (potential conflict between the same-level governments) occur in service delivery, the result may be positive in terms of encouraging competitiveness in service provision across regions (discussed in previous section). On the other hand, tensions arising from central-local relations (vertical tensions) not only obstruct policy implementation or service delivery (Turner, 1990) but also hinder decentralisation initiatives (Andrews & Schroeder, 2003) and decentralisation potential (Riverson et al., 1991). This turns into negative

results for either service users or delivery agencies. Therefore, as the tensions of concern in this section are vertical, it is likely that tensions can decelerate or halt initiative or responsiveness.

Decentralisation in the late 1990s enhanced the capacity of the sub-national governments in improving service delivery and concurrently increased their autonomy. They tended to tailor their services to local needs. Meanwhile, however, the central government still attempts to maintain the control over resources and authority. Standardization is one of the reasons they would claim for this control; another is the incapacity of the sub-national governments. Consequently, tensions arise from this pulling-and-hauling situation. Specifically, in the White Paper on 'Development of Regional Administration' (OPDC, 2004), it is stated that all provincial offices must be responsive to local needs. This intensifies provincial offices' autonomy of decision-making as well as tension between central and regional offices. In other words, the characteristic of responsiveness increases provincial office's opportunity to originate particular projects regarding local needs. To initiate these projects, regional offices may have to negotiate with the central office possibly resulting in the tension.

This section discusses evidence of the tensions between the SSO and the four selected SSROs (Chiang Mai, Lamphun, Phrae, Nan). To summarise, while tensions between the Phrae and Nan SSROs and the SSO have intensified over time; no evidence of tensions between the Lamphun and Chiang Mai SSROs and the SSO exists. Three subsections are presented below. Firstly, the evidence showing the SSO's attempts in retaining the uniform pattern of SIBD is presented. Then, the evidence from the SSRO's side is presented in the following two subsections: resistance and compliance.

Earlier literature reasserts that central authority may attempt to limit local autonomy. The SSO is indeed compliant with this assertion in three respects including: few attempts to decentralise, lack of acceptance of administrative diversity, and restriction on resource allocation. Firstly, in principle, in its fourth five-year strategic plan (2005-2009), the SSO emphasised the development of regional administration

including administrative decentralisation (Social Security Office, 2009). However, in practice, decentralisation is not their major focus. Two evidences are found to support this argument.

At the top of the hierarchy, although the Director-General intends to improve the regional administration of the SSO, the action has not yet been undertaken<sup>31</sup>. His policy is to restructure the regional system by grouping up a few SSROs and appointing a head of each group. However, this is still an ongoing process. Presumably, although this policy is completed, it does not signify that the SSRO gains more freedom. Rather, it increases the process of cooperation or, in other words, heightens the hierarchy.

Also, lack of attention to administrative decentralisation to regional offices is also found in the Division of Research and Development. It was found that the SSO provided the funding of research on the topic of regional administration in social insurance system in the fiscal year of 2009 (Social Security Office, 2009). However, according to the SSO official, this funding was terminated by the then Director-General stating that it was unnecessary to carry out this kind of research.

Secondly, it is possible that the SSO does not accept that the SSROs could be autonomous and initiating. According to one of the SSO officials in the Division of Administrative System Development<sup>32</sup>,

‘There is no variation of implementation across provinces. Every SSRO needs to follow goals and strategies specified by the SSO. Also, this is bureaucratic system. Policies must be implemented as the central government designed.’

In fact, if this perception is of the SSO officials in other divisions, it may not be surprising because the SSO has been operated under bureaucratic structure since the beginning. However, as this is a perspective of people in the Division responsible for bureaucratic reform in the SSO, the question of how the reform is actually

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<sup>31</sup> Informal conversation with the SSO official in the Division of Research and Development took place on the same occasion and date.

<sup>32</sup> Informal conversation with a group of the officials happened during the first contact with the SSO in order to access documents and set the interview schedule on 14 February 2011.

implemented arises<sup>33</sup>. Also, the Director-General's response to the question on the existence of diversification in SIBD at the provincial level is interesting. He stated that it was common for all SSROs to follow the SSO's plan and also agreed with what one of the officials in the Division of Administrative Development said earlier.

The scepticism towards the SSRO's initiative project was also emerged in the interview with the Director of Contribution Division. In response to the Nan SSRO's P&F, she stated that the project was not outstanding and did not get much cooperation from local governments. She seemed not paying much attention to it and directed any further questions to her subordinate. As she commented (interview, 10 January 2012):

‘I know that [P&F] project. It is not that outstanding (*doad den*), is it? I've heard that local governments were not that active in the cooperation after all. ... Perhaps you should go and ask Mr.A [official in Policy and Planning Division] instead.’

Mr.A is an official in Policy and Planning Division and a columnist of the Social Security Bulletin, a monthly publication of the SSO. His articles mostly summarised SIBD in Thailand and other countries. In 2010, he mentioned the P&F in his article stating that ‘[to provide] social insurance service in Thailand, we also cooperate with local governments in service provision. For example, the Nan SSRO is now doing an experiment on cooperating with local governments in some aspects [of service delivery] (Tanit, 2010)’. However, he had never mentioned it before 2010 or again in his later articles. The question is, thus, whether the P&F was not successful enough so that he did not write about it again. Consequently, these perceptions of central office leads to the conclusion that the SSO tends not to admit the variation of SIBD unless, presumably, it is dramatically outstanding.

Thirdly, resource allocation is restricted by the SSO. The SSO did not promise certain support for long-term initiative project so it was difficult for the SSROs to continue such project. In Phrae, for example, the SSRO was prepared to look for

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<sup>33</sup> The Division of Administrative System Development bears informally nickname ‘little OPDC’. It implies that the Division works as a sub-unit of the Office of Public Sector Development Committee. The OPDC is responsible for designing bureaucratic reform plan; the Division responsible for the implementation of the plan in the SSO.

alternative resources from the governor as it was likely that the SSO would not allocate budget for the second year of CLO project. Differently, the Nan SSRO used their autonomy in negotiating with the SSO. They proposed the project in the second year and the SSO was convinced to approve it. According to the bureaucratic reform strategy, as long as the project is based on local factors, the SSO needs to allow their field offices to carry out a sensible project.

Findings of the compliance can be explained at the national (from the SSO's document discussed earlier in Chapter 3) and provincial (in the fieldwork) levels. At the national level, most of the SSROs appear to agree with what the SSO suggested according to the SSO's document on the SSROs' opinion towards the devolved authorities. This document presents the result of discussion exhibiting whether the SSROs agreed or disagreed on each devolved authority (see Table 6.4). There have been 16 out of 30 issues of devolved authority agreed by more than 90% of the attending SSROs; six with 80-89%; three with 70-79%; two each with 60-69%. Considering that this document is an output of the bureaucratic procedure, the validity of the data is still questionable i.e. whether most of the SSROs actually agree with the devolved authority or what are reasons behind this compliance. These questions could possibly answered by the selected SSROs. However, unfortunately, this document was given after all interviews with the SSROs had been finished. Therefore, the questions could be answered in future research.

Table 6.4 Percentage of the SSROs' opinions towards the devolved authorities, in descending order of Agree percentage\*

No.	Short title**	Agree		Disagree		No comments	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
19	entitle1	70	98.59	0	0	1	1.41
18	law1	69	97.18	1	1.41	1	1.41
1	database	68	95.77	2	2.82	1	1.41
27	info3	68	95.77	1	1.41	2	2.82
9	inventory1	68	95.77	1	1.41	2	2.82
10	finance5	68	95.77	0	0	3	4.23
12	finance6	68	95.77	0	0	3	4.23
11	inventory2	68	95.77	0	0	3	4.23
3	registry2	67	94.37	0	0	4	5.63
5	finance2	66	92.96	4	5.63	1	1.41
8	finance4	66	92.96	4	5.63	1	1.41
15	payment3	66	92.96	1	1.41	4	5.63
7	finance3	65	91.55	5	7.04	1	1.41
28	finance7	65	91.55	3	4.23	3	4.22
17	info2	64	90.14	6	8.45	1	1.41
26	hr1	64	90.14	4	5.63	3	4.23
20	entitle2	63	88.73	7	9.86	1	1.41
25	law6	62	87.32	8	11.27	1	1.41
2	registry1	62	87.32	7	9.86	2	2.82
23	law4	61	85.92	10	14.08	0	0
16	info1	60	84.51	8	11.27	3	4.22
30	hr3	58	81.69	0	0	13	18.31
22	law3	55	77.46	14	19.72	2	2.82
21	law2	54	76.05	3	4.23	14	19.72
14	payment2	50	70.42	20	28.17	1	1.41
29	hr2	46	64.79	23	32.39	2	2.82
13	payment1	45	63.38	23	32.39	3	4.23
6	document1	42	59.15	28	39.44	1	1.41
4	finance1	42	59.15	27	38.03	2	2.82
24	law5	35	49.29	14	19.72	22	30.99

\* Self-constructed by the author

\*\* Full title can be found in Chapter 3 of this dissertation

Data source: Official document of 'Opinions towards devolved authorities' (SSO, 2010)

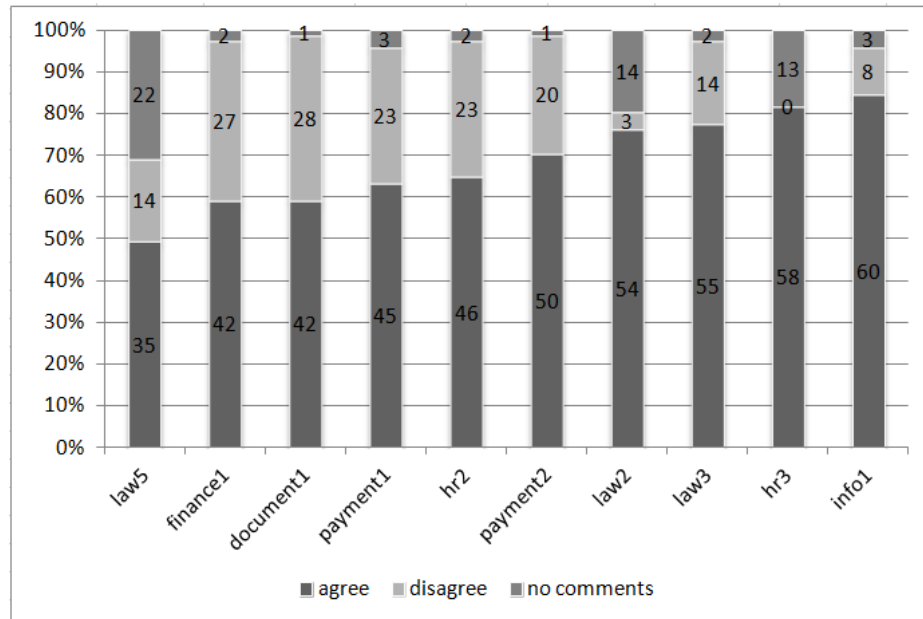
At the provincial level, bureaucratic characters maintain the SSRO's compliance with the SSO's policies as it is undeniable that bureaucracy is preoccupied with a single standard. In this research, the cases of Chiang Mai and Lamphun represent such compliance. The SSROs in these provinces followed the SSO's guideline rather than initiated a distinctive project. One similar reason given by both SSROs was that

it was more convenient for the insured persons to come to the SSRO office where provided a one-stop service access. Also, bureaucratic character tends to play important role in the SSRO's decision-making. For example, according to one of the Lamphun PSSS members, the SSRO was questioned whether they could do something new or change something in social insurance system. The answer to this question was that it was either impossible or difficult in the bureaucracy.

It is also claimed that workloads in both provinces were too much to spare the room for creativity so; presumably, this reinforces national uniformity which is a result of the SSRO's compliance with the SSO's policies. For example, Chiang Mai as the second-largest city of the country is often spotted by central departments to pilot their projects. Not only the Chiang Mai SSRO but also the Chiang Mai PAUs are often ordered to implement emergent policies in addition to their routine activities. Therefore, they mostly run out of time in following the central policies. However, the question of whether the work is really overloaded is still worth noted.

Similar to discussion on the compliance, the SSRO's resistance can be explained at national and provincial levels. At the national level, using the same set of data presented in Table 6.4, the resistance to the SSO's policy exists to some extent. Taking five examples of the most disagreed issues from the SSO's document (see Figure 6.4), three issues – law5, payment1, hr2 – can be discussed with data from interviews while the other two – document1, finance1 – cannot. The following discusses three issues with data from interviews. Firstly, 'law5' is the most disagreed issue with 46 out of 71 attending SSROs (51%). This issue relates to the authority to prosecute criminal charges if found in SIBD. Interestingly, none of the interviewees working SIBD service mentioned this as an authority devolved from the SSO. Rather, it was mentioned as the issue they could ask for help from the governor (e.g. interview with the Lamphun SSRO chief).

Figure 6.4 Disagreement of the SSROs on devolved authorities



Source: Official document of 'Opinions towards devolved authorities' (SSO, 2010)

Note: Data label shows the number of SSROs which agree/disagree/no comments

Secondly, the fourth most disagreed issue 'payment1' refers to devolved authority on benefit payment via bank transfer. It was mentioned by both the SSO and SSRO officials (interviews) that this authority could be useful for SIBD. However, controversially, devolving this authority was opposed in the document. Thirdly, the fifth one 'hr2' referred to authority for human resource development (HRD) in the SSRO. This issue, similar to 'payment1' was positively mentioned in the interview with the SSRO heads in Lamphun and Phrae as they valued skill development of their team and, as they claimed, supported their subordinates to take HRD programmes. Still, the other two cannot be discussed further because they were not mentioned in the interviews at all. Therefore, it is not possible to discuss them with interview data. These issues comprise of: the second most disagreed issue, 'finance1', referred to contribution refund and determination and cash transfer; and, the third one, 'document1', referred to the authority to issue official documents of contribution estimation and employee's salary declaration.



Indeed, the controversial issues may raise the question of how accurate this SSO's document is. Further, the question could be about the representativeness of each SSRO's opinion in the meeting which this document was produced upon. However, on the other hand, this piece of information is crucial as it invites more questions on validation of the data. Therefore, cross-examined with interview data, this document should be noted as basic information to start the discussion on the SSO-SSRO relations.

At the provincial levels, the resistance is a result of central-local tension which is found in two provinces, Phrae and Nan, where the initiative projects were undertaken. Generally, most of the SSRO's projects compliant with the SSO's policy will be approved. The SSO as a decision maker is always cautious with financial and personnel distribution (the SSF board is a policy maker). When a new fiscal year is about to start, the SSRO will submit their project propositions. If proposed projects or activities are compatible with the SSO's policy, they are simply approved. However, if a project is novel, the SSO may ask for more detail in the first place. If the supplement detail is not convincing, the project will be disapproved. This, in the meantime, results in tensions between them.

Speaking of the link between the resistance and the innovation, if the SSRO wants to initiate a distinctive project, they need to fight against the pressure from the SSO. Innovation which diversifies the service delivery is not expected. Indeed, NPM grants a chance to front-line offices to tailor the service and the central is supposed to support them. However, in practice, if the innovation is not 'big' enough, the central tends to ignore it stating that this is not an innovation but just a new form of service. Therefore, as they put more pressure on the project, the regional office who believed in their success tended to resist the pressure by putting more effort to prove that the innovation was worth doing.

Further, the SSRO's resistance to the SSO's pressure exists within three levels of analysis: organisational, managerial, and operational. Firstly, as the SSO indirectly stressed uniform pattern of service delivery at the ground level, the two SSROs had slightly different ways in response to the SSO's pressure. The Phrae SSRO planned

to ignore the pressure; whereas, the Nan SSRO decided to avoid the pressure. Both of them apparently tried to avoid confrontation. However, the avoidance does not mean none resistance. The resistance implicitly existed in the initiative projects.

In Phrae, the SSRO was prepared for the failure of getting support from the SSO. They said they would try to get the project approved. But if that was not the case, they would be ready for Plan B, finding support from other potential sources such as the Governor or local governments. Differently, in Nan, the SSRO chief kept operating the project for the third year despite the lack of full support from the SSO. His solution was to submit the project which would be acceptable to the SSO in order to get minimum financial support and green light for the project. The Nan SSRO produced two projects in correspondence with each other. One is the P&F, another is the 'network building with local governments' project. Both projects were operated in supplement to each other.

At the managerial level, the chief's character is significant to the resistance. The most prominent evidence is found in Nan where the cooperation project had actually been in operation before the current chief come. According to the Nan SSRO official, the project had been undertaken before 2008 but it was formalised by the current chief. This made the project become outstanding from 2008 the year in which the Nan SSRO get the P&M project approved. Later on, the project started drawing attention from other SSROs and the SSO. Differently, the chief in Phrae is also active. He said he was not the main drive of the project and accredited the Head of Front Office with the initiation of the CLO project. However, his enthusiasm on initiatives was noticed through the interview and his action. In the interview, he mentioned the chance of starting a new project several times. In his office, before the interview started, he was listening to radio programme organised by the SSRO. This programme was expected to be a new communication channel with insured persons in the province.

Undeniably, at the operational level, the officials in both Phrae and Nan SSRO are also involved in the resistance mechanism. This is more prominent in Phrae where the idea of finding another source of funding was mentioned by the heads of front

office and back office. In Nan, although it is unclear how the officials take part in the resistance, the sympathy they have towards service recipients' difficulties seems to play a role. According to the head of front office, most of the officials were local people and they understood socio-cultural conditions of the province. They would be willing to serve the recipients. This, as a result, indirectly supported the P&M project operation. However, as the Nan chief's character seems to be self-driven and more formal (compared to the Phrae chief), the communication between the chief and officials occurred basically in regular meetings of the office.

For example, despite the fact that administrative decentralisation is not the SSO's focus and variety of SIBD is unlikely allowed, the Phrae SSRO still wanted to continue their CLO project. Since the result of the CLO project was satisfied to the SSRO (interview with the SSRO Chief and Head of Back Office, *ibid*), they planned for the second year (2011) of the project. There are three factors which could possibly enable them to continue the project. First, if the SSO's approval is still uncertain, the SSRO may get support from the Governor instead. Second, strategic planning, as a part of decentralisation, seems to encourage the Chief of the SSRO to be performance-driven. (OPDC, 2003, p. 109)

#### *6.2.4.2 Alternative resource providers of the SSRO: governor and local government*

The diversified pattern of SIBD occurs with supports from alternative resource providers in the province. Although it is not prominent in Chiang Mai, the cases of other three provinces reasserts that the governor and local government play significant roles as alternative resource providers in SIBD.

Firstly, the SSRO's autonomy is supplemented by alternative resources from the governor's extra budget. Previously, the SSRO had only two main sources of budget: the annual budget from the Government and the extra-annual budget from the SSO. The former is basically spent on salary and infrastructure; the latter is on project management. After the enactment of the Decree of Good Governance in 2003, the CEO policy empowered the governor in two respects. Financially, the Governor was

allocated an extra budget for any operations in the province regarding his/her discretion. Non-financially, the Governor had power of rewarding and punishing the government officials in the province by, for example, relocating them.

There are two examples of how the governors have become alternative resource providers for the SSRO. The most prominent example of the governor as alternative resource provider exists in Lamphun. The Lamphun governor provided resources for the SSRO to participate in the GCS project. However, the case of Lamphun shows that, despite being empowered, the governor's short-term stay in each province should be viewed with concern as inconsistent support. As the governor's policy changed due to the usual relocation, the new governor did not provide support for the SSRO in the GCS (interviews with the Lamphun SSRO). Therefore, lacking resources, the SSRO decided to stop providing services at the counter service. Another example is the Phrae SSRO. Although the governor's support for the Phrae SIBD did not exist during the research fieldwork, the SSRO's perception of available resources implies the governor's potential of being an alternative resource provider.

In 2011, the SSRO had been relying on the extra-annual budget in operating their CLO project. However, as they anticipated that the SSO would stop their project, they mentioned the governor's extra budget as an alternative (Phrae SSRO official, interview, 4 February 2011).

'In fact, our [CLO] project was designed as a three-year project. We have just finished the first year and are expecting to continue the project [in the second year]. However, I heard that the Department<sup>34</sup> [the SSO] may disapprove the project the coming year because they could not let double standard happen in the system. If that really happens, we may need to submit the project to the Governor requesting for his financial support.'

Apparently, the Governor's extra budget has become an alternative for the SSRO resulting in its greater autonomy. Previously, if projects were disapproved by the SSO, the SSRO had no other choices of resources. They would reluctantly give up

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<sup>34</sup> The SSRO officials often refer to the SSO as the Department or the central not the SSO. It reflects that the officials, although some of them distinguished the SSO from other public organisations, always perceives their organisation as a part of single hierarchy rather than a special unit of government.

the idea or provide another satisfactory project to the SSO. In contrast, as the Governor could provide financial support for them, the Phrae SSRO tends not to give up the project. If the SSO disagrees with their project, they will carry out a second plan of the project operation, being financed by the provincial Governor's Office. Eventually, if the Governor agrees with this project, they could do what they really want – continuing their CLO project in the second year. Therefore, this alternative, the Governor's extra budget, prominently provide an option for the SSRO's project operation resulting in more freedom of the SSRO.

Secondly, local governments are also capable of giving support to the SSRO as long as they still perceive the SSRO's project useful. Two examples are taken from Phrae and Nan. In Phrae, 31 local governments participated in the CLO project providing service accesses of the SSROs. According to interviews with local organisations in Phrae, two of the interviewees stated that the advantage of participating in the CLO project was that the relationship with the SSRO became more established and they learned more about SIBD. Their relationship with the SSRO was previously similar to the SSRO-employer relation; they just need to pay contributions for some of their organisation members (i.e. permanent and temporary employees) who were entitled to social insurance. Differently, participating in the CLO project, they had more chances to communicate with the SSRO and they were also an information provider for their employees. Therefore, they would continue participating in the project.

Also, the Nan SSRO utilized administrative resources of local governments to complete their projects. Indeed, the SSRO used the LAO's authority to put them into the P&F so that they did not have a chance to make their own decision as happened in Phrae. However, local governments as autonomous agencies are still a result of decentralisation which became a supportive factor for the SSRO. They have their own resources which the SSRO could ask for help such as a space and a human resource.

Consequently, the Phrae and Nan's local cooperation projects were carried on with supports from local governments. Although reasons of local governments' participation in the projects are different, their agreement to provide staffs and spaces

apparently enhances the SSRO's capabilities to provide initiative services. In Nan, all 99 local governments participated in the P&F because of the order from the LAO. Similarly to Phrae, they needed to provide service accesses of the SSRO. However, while Phrae local governments were providing staffs for SIB-related service and a space for document shelves, the Nan SSRO requested more from Nan local governments. For example, they additionally asked for their mobile office space in the Pua Municipality of which they were granted. These services subsequently became part of the diversification of SIBD in the province.

#### *6.2.4.3 Changing patterns of post-decentralisation SIBD*

Drawing upon the analysis in earlier sections, this section aims to portray SIBD pattern in the four provinces which is diversified after the decentralisation. Following the analytical framework employed in Chapter 3, this research discusses the changes of SIBD pattern as a result of the late 1990s decentralisation in two dimensions: authority and resources. In terms of authority, it is found that Chiang Mai pattern remains the same as before the decentralisation while the other three provinces' patterns are diversified. None of key actors in Chiang Mai exercised their decentralised authority for SIBD. However, at least one actor in the other three provinces executed their decentralised authority. In Lamphun, the governor appears to employ his power over the SSRO to serve at the GCS service point while other actors remain working under the pattern of pre-decentralisation.

In Phrae and Nan, however, the governors similarly seem not to be using their decentralised authority while changes occur with other three actors. Hence, it is apparent that the decentralisation causes the diversification of provincial SIBD pattern. Further, authority execution of each actor should be compared across provinces. Firstly, for the SSRO, Chiang Mai and Lamphun are the same as before decentralisation while Phrae and Nan seems to employ their decentralised authority in negotiation with the SSO. Secondly, in reverse of the SSRO, the SSO seems similar to pre-decentralisation in Chiang Mai and Lamphun while their controlling power is decreased in Nan and Phrae. Thirdly, local governments in Chiang Mai and Lamphun are the same as before the decentralisation while in Phrae and Nan they are

more active in power execution. Lastly, the governors in Chiang Mai, Phrae and Nan remain the same while the Lamphun governor executed his decentralised authority.

In terms of resource, Chapter 5 concludes that ‘decentralised resources’ are almost impossible to identify. This section still insists that is the case. However, findings in Section 5.1.3 (who gives what to whom) could provide preliminary conclusion on resource exchange after the late 1990s decentralisation. In brief, Chiang Mai’s pattern is the same as pre-decentralisation whereas the other three are diversified. In Lamphun, the governor allocated more of his resource for SIBD. However, other Lamphun key actors remain the same. In Phrae and Nan, all key actors, except the governor, spends more resources in SIBD. The SSRO requested for more resources while the SSO allowed additional resources to be allocated. Local governments spent more of their devolved resources on SIBD so their positions also shifted closer to the post-decentralisation too.

Therefore, it could be concluded that that, as a result of decentralisation, diversity of SIBD exists across the four selected provinces. While SIBD in Chiang Mai is not diversified or remains the same as the pre-decentralisation, resource-authority patterns are diversified in the other three provinces including Lamphun, Phrae and Nan. Phrae and Nan are the cases in which decentralisation affected all key actors in both authority and resource dimensions. Lamphun is the case which decentralisation obviously enabled the governor to cooperate more with the SSRO. Lastly, the Chiang Mai case is where all four actors seem indifferent to decentralisation. Also, none of the four actors actually implemented the decentralised authorities and resources. In all cases, the SSO still performed its role as same as in the pre-decentralisation period. Most governors performed the traditional roles; exceptionally, the Lamphun governor executed his devolved authority and provided resources for the SSRO’s service in attempt to have them involved in the GCS. While the SSROs in Phrae and Nan employed their decentralised power, the Lamphun and Chiang Mai SSROs did not. Similarly, while local governments in Nan and Phrae provided resources for the SSRO; they appeared not to be involved in SIBD in Lamphun and Chiang Mai.

### **6.3 Decentralised authority, responsiveness, and diversity**

According to Hutchcroft (2001, p. 24), '[B]efore one can adequately shape decentralisation initiatives or assess their impact on development and democracy, it is first necessary to define more clearly what is meant by the terms "centralisation" and "decentralisation"'. This research has already completed this task in Chapter 2. However, it needs to be further emphasised that 'decentralisation' in this chapter does not only mean the transfer of power from central authority to its subordinate (World Bank, 2005) but also restricted to decentralisation of decision-making. This concept – decision-making decentralisation – focuses on 'how the authority to make political decisions is distributed among different tiers (Treisman, 2002, p. 6)'. Thus, discussion on decentralisation in this chapter is related to the process and power of decision-making being decentralised to sub-national authorities. Accordingly, 'decentralised authority' is restricted to the power of decision-making to participate in or initiate a distinctive project. If the actor voluntarily participates in other actor's project (responsiveness) or initiates a distinctive project (initiative), it is considered that they applied decentralised authority.

To measure decentralisation impact has never been an easy task (Dreher, 2006). As Smith suggests (1985, p. 85), 'one obvious test of change in levels of decentralisation relates to the functions and powers of subordinate governments' which may be measured by using data on spending and personnel. This research has attempted to do so in Chapter 3. However, these indicators could not exhibit the impact of decision-making decentralisation at the implementation level. Rather, it shows changes at the policy level. Therefore, this chapter uses responsiveness and initiative of each provincial actor as indicators of the decentralisation impact. As responsiveness reflects the extent to which local unit could make a decision, a hypothesis could be set as: 'the more responsive local unit is, the more decentralised they are'.



### 6.3.1 Perception of decentralised authority

This section discusses perception of the SSRO chiefs and provincial governors on decentralised authority only. None of local governments were asked if they perceived that authority was decentralised in practice. It is apparent that all local governments in Thailand are given authority and resource (see Chapter 3). In Phrae and Nan, although local governments were interviewed, this question was exempted and the question of their implementation of authority in SIB-related activity was rather of main interest. Also, Chiang Mai and Lamphun were cases where local governments did not participate in any of the SSRO's project so they were not interviewed.

In overall, most of the SSROs and provincial governors perceived that authority had been decentralised, while three interviewees (Phrae governor, Nan SSRO, Nan governor) did not agree that the decentralisation had empowered them in reality. Three SSROs – Chiang Mai, Lamphun, Phrae – ostensibly acknowledged the decentralised authority. In Chiang Mai, the SSRO chief simply agreed that the decentralisation empowered the SSRO. In Lamphun, the SSRO Chief agreed and concluded that the SSRO's operation had become more flexible after the decentralisation as he replied (interview, 22 February 2011):

‘If I have to compare [between before and after the decentralisation], it must be in regards of operation [of SIBD]. ... The integration [of provincial administration under the IPA policy] means empowering the Governor. He/she gaining more power in social insurance is authorised to, simply speaking, work on behalf of the SSO Director General. Then, as the Governor being authorised, the work at the provincial level has become more flexible. We [the SSRO and the Governor] need not to wait for the central department's permission. We can work it out at the provincial level. Sometimes the Governor even authorises us [the SSRO] to lead the activity.’

In Phrae, the Chief of Phrae SSRO implicitly stated that SIA had rarely been decentralised before the late 1990s. As he said (interview, 4 February 2011);

‘...if you ask what were the missions of the SSRO before the integrative provincial administration [IPA] being enacted, I would say that it followed all policies of the SSO’

Further, comparing the situation between before and after the decentralisation, he agreed that the SSRO became more autonomous.

‘Was it [the SSRO] autonomous [before the late 1990s decentralisation]? It seemed not because the SSRO needed to follow the guidelines and orders. However, after the integrative provincial policies, it seemed [to be more autonomous]... One indicator is rewarding system’

He referred to the rewarding system as an indicator of freedom in the sense that it was a result of decentralisation which affected the SSRO’s autonomy. The ‘rewarding system’ he mentioned was the relocation of the SSRO chiefs. Although the previous system of relocation was still unclear, two presumptions could be addressed in accordance with the previous general relocation system. First, theoretically, it must be based on merit system. Second, it could be operated through negotiations between the SSO and the chiefs themselves.

However, after the decentralisation, the relocation – either promotion or demotion – was based on the Chief’s performance. Her/his performance would be evaluated based on the target proposed before October, the starting point of a new fiscal year. For instance, if the SSRO could not collect the contributions from employers as projected, it indicated that the Chief was incompetent and would be relocated to a province unwanted by other chiefs or remote from Bangkok. Conversely, if s/he could achieve the target, s/he would be relocated to a ‘better<sup>35</sup>’ province or his/her requested province.

As a result of the pressure of the new performance evaluation, the SSRO was given more power in decision making and project planning. They could do whatever they want in order to achieve the proposed target. In other words, what they must do was to achieve the target, or the ends, regardless the means they used. As the Phrae Chief suggested,

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<sup>35</sup> To determine which province is ‘better’ is fluid and subjective. According to the Phrae Chief, the bigger province is not always better-off; rather, it is considered as more complex and difficult. Some chiefs prefer a smaller province because it is easier to achieve the target and maintain their performance at a certain level.

‘...working in this [current social insurance] system, honestly speaking, [in order to achieve the target] it depends on the strategy of each SSRO. Some SSROs prefer general way of public relation. Some prefer door knocking. Some prefer periodical monitoring.’

However, the Nan SSRO chief seemingly did not acknowledge the decentralised authority as he had different opinions towards it. Being asked if the SSRO had become more autonomous after the late 1990s decentralisation, the Chief replied firmly that the SSRO had always been autonomous (interview, 11 October 2011) as following:

‘Provincial offices are autonomous. We [the SSRO] can make decisions based on information we have in the province. The IPA policy has no effect on us. Integration (*buranakaan*) [of provincial administration] is just a word which has never come into practice.’

The Integrated Provincial Administration, as he claimed, increased the power of neither the Governor nor any PAU in practice. As SIA is a special public service delivery involved in fund management, the Governor cannot intervene in the decision-making of the SSRO either before or after the decentralisation. Besides, the IPA policy is not only about empowering the governor but also making strategic plan. Being asked if strategic planning affected the SSRO’s operation, the SSRO’s chief admitted that it did provide a chance for provincial offices to respond to local needs more than before. Therefore, despite the chief instant response, the Nan SSRO has gained more autonomy after the late 1990s decentralisation.

It is concluded that the Chiang Mai and Lamphun governor agreed that the late 1990s decentralisation had given them more power while the Phrae and Nan governor unlikely agreed with such statement. In fact, at the beginning of interviews, all provincial governors agreed that the late 1990s authorised them more authority to them. However, their opinions in conclusion varied. On the one hand, Chiang Mai and Lamphun governors similarly insisted that their power had been increased after the decentralisation. However, interestingly, the Chiang Mai governor suggested that Chiang Mai is a province of compromise culture and perhaps the increase of power may be unnecessary. On the other hand, the Phrae and Nan governors similarly

commented that the integration had been operated in provincial administration and the IPA did empower them in terms of money and personnel. They can encourage initiatives in the province by providing provincial offices extra budget. However, their authority in practice (power) remained the same.

### **6.3.2 Implementation of decentralised authority**

Regarding the implementation of decentralised authority, ten actors can be classified into three groups: unlikely to be implementing, implementing, unclear. Firstly, no evidence indicates that four actors (Chiang Mai SSRO, Chiang Mai governor, Phrae governor, Nan governor) implement the authority which leads to the conclusion that they are unlikely to implement the decentralised authority. Secondly, it is evident that four actors (Lamphun governor, Phrae SSRO, Phrae local government, Nan SSRO) implement their decentralised authority. Lastly, it is unclear whether the two actors (Lamphun SSRO, Nan local government) are implementing the authority. To conclude, evidence suggests that the SSROs are likely to implement the authorities while the governors are unlikely. It is unclear however to make a conclusion for local governments. The following discusses the implementation by actor.

In case of the SSROs, evidently, the Phrae and Nan SSROs implement the authority while the Chiang Mai does not. In Phrae and Nan, the SSROs implemented decentralised decision-making authority in starting initiative projects (CLO in Phrae, P&F in Nan). The Phrae SSRO started the project in response to local needs. In Nan, not only local needs but also the Chief's attitudes appear to be key factors in four respects. Firstly, the Nan SSRO Chief seemingly perceived the SSO as both a budget provider and a creativity block. He stated that the SSRO had been working freely regardless of decentralisation. What limited their capability however was 'the bureaucracy'. He stated that all provincial offices could be creative but the creativity could possibly be hindered by the higher tier of bureaucracy. Therefore, he overlooked the power of central control and ran the Nan SSRO as autonomously and creatively as possible.

Secondly, the chief had a different concept of efficiency from the SSO's. While the SSO was concerned about benefit-cost efficiency, the chief believed in equality as much as efficiency.

'Efficiency is not only about benefit (*kumrai*) and loss (*kaad-tun*). We [the SSRO] must also consider equality (*kwaam sa-mur-phak*) too. In Nan, some insured persons live far from the SSRO's office. If we are too concerned about benefit and loss [of public service delivery], what about them [the insured persons in remote area]?'

Thirdly, he believed in the establishment of a 'social insurance empire'. In the interview, he mentioned that the SSRO should consider the chance of creating its own 'empire (*ah-na-juk*)'.

'We must know who could cooperate with us and how they could help (*chuay leua*) us. We must build our own empire. Within this empire, the SSRO must be able to make the most of everything.'

On the one hand, this empire denoted an entity supposedly promoting co-operation but actually dominated and used by the SSRO. On the other hand, this empire meant cooperation in which a strong bond was built to pull all actors together. As he also suggested, 'the empire must be strengthened for the sustainability purpose'.

Fourthly, the chief had persistently been interested in the issue of setting up a branch of the SSRO regardless of the number of insured persons. It was found that the Nan SSRO Chief completed his Master's with the dissertation topic of 'Implementation of the SSRO Branch Setting-up policy in Narathiwas<sup>36</sup>'. In principle, for the SSRO to have a branch, at least 100,000 of insured persons must be registered in the province. Nan is excessively small, with 10,715 insured persons, in this sense so that the branch could not be set up. However, he managed to exercise his idea under the project of Mobile Branches. As a result, the P&F was started in 2008 with a major cooperation between the SSRO and the LAO. Two projects – M-service, mobile branches - were delivered subsequently. The SSRO chief drove these set of his beliefs into practice. He successfully convinced the SSO to allocate a budget for the

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<sup>36</sup> Narathiwas is the province in which he had worked before he moved to Nan.

Nan SSRO and the Nan LAO to commit in the P&F. In contrast, the Chiang Mai SSRO is labelled as ‘unlikely implementing’ without doubts since no initiatives are found in Chiang Mai.

It is hard to conclude whether the Lamphun SSRO implements the authority. While no initiatives of the SSRO are found in Lamphun as same as Chiang Mai, the participation of the Lamphun SSRO in the governor’s GCS project suggests that perhaps the Lamphun SSRO does implement the authority. The SSRO implemented the decentralised authority by voluntarily participating in the GCS project which was not in the SSO’s policy guidelines. However, participating in the GCS project is rarely related to responsiveness to local needs. Rather, it was found that the SSRO decided to take part in the project because the Governor requested their cooperation and provided them with financial support for overtime staffs. Therefore, the case of implementation for the Lamphun is SSRO rather unclear.

In case of governors, although two provincial governors – Chiang Mai, Lamphun – agreed that the decentralisation brought on more authority to them, only the Lamphun governor implemented the decentralised authority. In Chiang Mai, evidence of the implementation is not found. For example, there is no evidence of initiative cooperation between the governor and the Chiang Mai SSRO. Contrarily, Lamphun is the only case in this research which the governor implemented his decentralised authority. He could convince the Lamphun SSRO to participate in the GCS project which was hierarchically assigned to the Governor’s Office by the Ministry of Interior.

Contrarily, Phrae and Nan are cases where the governor indicated that their power remained the same as before decentralisation and evidence of decentralised authority implementation are not found in both case. In Nan, the governor exemplified the case of a claimant whom he had helped to get the benefits as the implementation of decentralised authority (interview, 13 October 2011). This claimant should have been entitled but his employer had not paid the contribution. It was likely that his claim would be denied. Therefore, the governor decided to negotiate with the SSRO and consequently he received the benefits. However, this exemplifies negotiation

between actors rather than the implementation of decentralised authority. Therefore, it cannot be claimed that the governor implemented the decentralised authority. Moreover, looking at the Nan SSRO's activities cooperating with the Nan Governor's Office, none of them complied with local initiatives criteria. Therefore, it is concluded that the Nan governor was not applying the decentralised authority.

In case of local governments, it is concluded that local governments differently implemented the decentralised authority as their decisions to join the SSRO's project were made in a different way. Among five local governments in Phrae, for example, an official from Mae Jua Municipality stated that the organisation was selected because they, according to what the SSRO informed them, had been awarded as one of the best practice local governments in Phrae. While in Baan Lao subdistrict, the Baan Lao SAO official stated that the organisation participated in the SSRO's project based on the SAO Chief Executive. However, with two local governments, it should be noted that the case of Nan is difficult to clearly define whether they actually implemented their decentralised authority. Their participation was requested by the Nan Local Administration Office (LAO) whose authority includes the right to demand local governments. Therefore, the implementation of local governments in Nan is left unclear (O/R).

### **6.3.3 Degree of decentralisation**

This section discusses the SSRO's decentralisation degree regarding two respects – decentralised activities, decentralised contexts. This degree refers to the decentralisation degree of the SSRO not the case (or the province). If the determination is for the case as a whole, it would involve too many actors with various degree of decentralisation requiring attribution to each of them. This would lead to a question of how these various degrees of decentralisation could be generalized into a single degree.

The SSRO's level of decentralised activities is derived from their perception and implementation of decentralised authority. Evidence (summarised in Table 6.6) suggests that the SSRO's degree of decentralised activities in Lamphun and Nan is at

moderate level while Chiang Mai is at low level and Phrae is high. Firstly, at a low level, Chiang Mai is the case where the SSRO perceived that decentralisation had impact on SIBD but no evidence of the implementation has been found. Secondly, at a moderate level, the Lamphun SSRO perceived the decentralisation impact and implemented the decentralised authority by participating in the governor's GCS project. Thirdly, at a high level, the Phrae SSRO perceived the impact and implemented the authority in running the initiative CLO project. Lastly, at a moderate level, Nan is where the SSRO disagreed that the decentralisation had an impact on their operation but, in contrary, they implemented the initiative P&F.

Secondly, the SSRO's level of decentralised contexts is derived from two actors' (governor, local government) perception and implementation of decentralised authorities. Lamphun is the only case where degree of decentralised contexts is at moderate level; the other three cases are at low level. Firstly, in Chiang Mai, the governor likely perceived the decentralisation impact but did not implement the decentralised authority. Local government is not involved in the Chiang Mai SIBD. Therefore, this case is specified as a low degree of decentralised contexts. Secondly, Lamphun is similar to Chiang Mai in terms of no local government involvement. However, its degree of decentralised contexts is at moderate level as the governor likely perceived the decentralisation and using his decentralised authority to urge the SSRO to cooperate in the GCS project. Lastly, Phrae and Nan are at the low level of decentralised contexts. Indeed, local government implemented their decentralised authority in participating in the SSRO's initiative project and this should place the two cases at the moderate degree. However, the governors in two provinces unlikely perceived the decentralisation impact and their implementation of decentralised authority is not evident. This, therefore, make the two cases remain at the low degree of decentralised contexts.

Taking the two components (decentralised activities and contexts) into consideration, the four SSROs have different degree of decentralisation. Firstly, Phrae is the case where the SSRO has moderately high degree of decentralisation as they have a high degree of decentralised activities and low degree of decentralised contexts. Secondly,



Lamphun is the case in which the SSRO has a moderate degree of both decentralised activities and contexts. Thirdly, the Nan SSRO has moderately low degree of decentralisation as they have moderate degree of decentralised activities and low degree of decentralised contexts. Lastly, Chiang Mai is the case where the SSRO has a low degree of decentralisation as they have low degree of both decentralised activities and contexts.

Table 6.5 The SSRO's degree of decentralisation

Case	Decentralised activities	Decentralised contexts	Degree of decentralisation
Chiang Mai	Low	Low	Low
Lamphun	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Phrae	High	Low	Moderately High
Nan	Moderate	Low	Moderately Low

In conclusion, two criteria – perception, implementation – of decentralised authority are employed to analyse decentralisation impacts on SIA. In terms of perception, three actors (Phrae governor, Nan governor, Nan SSRO) tentatively (or mostly?) disagree that the authority is decentralised in practice. Evidently, also, the SSRO and local government in Phrae and Nan have implemented decentralised authority; while the governor has also carried it out in Lamphun only. Contrarily, Chiang Mai is proved to be the case where decentralisation does not have an impact. Interestingly, Chiang Mai is the province in which Thaksin and his cliques intently dominate provincial politics. No connections between Thaksin and the SIBD were found. However, the fact that one of his ex-party members is in the PSSS and could avoid contribution payment is worth noting as one possible political pressure on SIBD.

## 6.4 Associations between decentralisation, collaboration and diversity

In this section, two associations are clarified to answer the central question of this research (see Section 1.2): decentralisation-diversity association and collaboration-diversity association. Firstly, as shown in Table 6.7, the degree of decentralisation is not always congruent with the degree of diversity. It was believed that there was a positive association between decentralisation and SIBD diversity. However, this research finds supporting evidence in only two cases: Chiang Mai and Phrae. Neither the SSRO nor the key actor (governor) employs their decentralised authority in Chiang Mai while Phrae is the opposite. It is possible that political tensions in Chiang Mai potentially hinder the implementation of decentralisation policy in the province (see Section 6.3). In contrast, Lamphun (low diversity, moderate decentralisation) and Nan (high diversity, moderately low decentralisation) are cases in which the two degrees are not congruent. In Lamphun, the governor applied his decentralised authority to pressure the SSRO. Although the SSRO was rarely employed their decentralised authority, the governor's action makes the decentralisation into moderate degree. In Nan, SIBD is highly diversified but the SSRO did not perceive and implement their decentralised authority. Although the governor and local governments seemingly employ their decentralised authority, evidence shows that they did not (see Section 5.3).

Table 6.6 Associations between decentralisation, collaboration and diversity

Case	Diversity	Decentralisation	Collaboration
Chiang Mai	Low	Low	Low
Lamphun	Low	Moderate	Moderately Low
Phrae	High	Moderately High	Moderately High
Nan	High	Moderately Low	High

Interestingly, the association between collaboration and diversity seems more positive than decentralisation-diversity association. In two cases of low diversity (Chiang Mai, Lamphun), the degree of collaboration appears to be low too. In

Chiang Mai, none initiatives were started and collaboration was not found in provincial SIBD. In Lamphun, responsive project (GCS) was operated in cooperation with the governor. Despite being slightly diversified, this cooperation is not an initiative and the case remains at the moderately low degree of collaboration. By the same token, Phrae and Nan are highly diversified cases with a high degree of collaboration. Both of them provided initiative services in collaboration with local organisations. Therefore, this leads to the conclusion that collaboration does have potential in SIBD diversification. Particularly in the four selected cases, SIBD diversity is evidently more associated with collaboration than decentralisation.

In other words, this research finds that collaboration is more likely a positive factor in diversity. When collaboration occurs, the diversity will likely occur too. On the contrary, if collaboration rarely appears, the diversity may be trivial. From the four provinces, evidence suggests that collaboration brings on more actors and innovations and these thus increase the diversity of SIBD. It should be noted that only those requested by the SSRO (e.g. local governments) got involved in SIBD collaboration. These actors were purposively selected to collaborate in particular projects. Several other actors in provincial politics i.e. politicians or business elites could join in SIBD collaboration too but this is quite unlikely. As discussed in Section 6.1, non-bureaucratic actors (politicians and business elites alike) tend to take SIBD for granted. While evidence of these actors' interest in SIBD is hard to find in the media, it is even harder to find such evidence in the field. A few evidences suggested the contrary that *Chao Pho* are involved in SIBD not because of their interest but other reasons such as privilege of being the PSSS or recommended by their cliques (see Chapter 5).

On the other hand, decentralisation is not always positively associated with the diversity of SIBD. For instance, the diversity is not necessarily increased even when decentralisation is acknowledged or implemented by provincial actors (see Section 6.3). Evidence suggests that decentralisation policy indeed enhances authorities of SIBD actors but, unsurprisingly, it results in nothing if the actors are not implementing their decentralised authorities. For example, in the case of Chiang Mai,

both the SSRO and the governor acknowledged that the decentralisation but no evidence shows that they utilised their decentralised authorities. Meanwhile, no innovation in SIBD is found in Chiang Mai. On the contrary Nan is the case with low degree of decentralisation and high degree of diversity. Being slightly decentralised, the SSRO chief disagreed that he gained more authorities from decentralisation policy and neither the governor nor local governments perceived and implemented the decentralised authorities. However, being a highly diversified case, the SSRO managed to start SIBD initiatives and consequently diversify its SIBD pattern.

Further, it could be concluded that inconsistent association between decentralisation and the diversity of SIBD involves not only implementation gaps (outcomes are different from proposed goals) but also political pressures. While the first is usually an obvious problem of any policy implementation, the second reflects how Thai provincial politics obstructs decentralisation resulting in rigid form of SIBD. For instance, some SSROs may want to execute their decentralised authorities and start an initiative. However, they may need to deal with *Chao Pho* in the province or senior bureaucrats from the ministry or department. For example, Chiang Mai is the case with low decentralisation and thus low diversity, possibly for three reasons. Firstly, Chiang Mai SIBD involves *Chao Pho* who is well-connected with the national-level government and Thaksin. As presented in Section 6.1, EmR2 was not forced to pay the contribution his company owed the SSRO. With all possible evidence, this could be because of his power regarding the connections with political and business elites both at the national and provincial level.

Secondly, there seems to be intervention from a senior bureaucrat who came from some department (implicitly suggest as those who are from the MoL) in Chiang Mai SIBD (see Section 6.1). This does not directly interfere in SIBD but it does show how politicised Chiang Mai SIBD is. Lastly, Chiang Mai's political culture of compromise (see Section 6.1) may preclude the SSRO, or any organisations in the province, from initiatives. Such compromise connotes negotiations between stakeholders which usually lead to agreements in which political damages to selected stakeholders are minimised. These selected stakeholders are unsurprisingly political

and business elites in the province. Thus, to start an initiative among these circumstances, it often involves negotiations with those with money and power in the province.

## Conclusion

This chapter finds that collaboration is more positively associated with the diversification than decentralisation. While only two cases (Chiang Mai, Phrae) exemplify the positive association between decentralisation and diversity, there are positive associations between collaboration and diversity in all four provinces. Thus, this supports the view that not only decentralisation has impacts on SIBD. Collaboration is also, or to some extent more, influential to the diversification. Also, it could be concluded that the inconsistent association between decentralisation and the diversity of SIBD is a result of implementation gaps (outcomes are different from proposed goals) and political pressures at the provincial level. The former is usually an obvious problem of policy implementation. The latter reflects how Thai provincial politics obstructs decentralisation resulting in rigid form of SIBD. The prominent example is the case of Chiang Mai in which *Chao Pho* and senior bureaucrats intervened in SIBD and compromising culture is of utmost concern to several actors e.g. the governor, the SSRO.

Last but not least, the findings in this chapter suggest that diversity of SIBD requires collaboration rather than decentralisation (localising power). Decentralisation does change the power and resource structure of SIBD. The SSRO becomes more autonomous with greater autonomy, alternative resource providers, and less central control. However, the SSRO's autonomy is increased only by the definition that it is 'fundamentally institutional, and is rooted in the ability of a government agency to perform its functions without interference from other governments. (Ellison, 1998, p. 42).' In practice, there remains central control which generates tensions among actors. In contrast, collaboration brings on new actors and relations which creates innovations and diversifies the pattern of SIBD. It is a mutual agreement in which actors willingly work together under a certain set of objectives.

## Chapter 7 : Conclusion

This chapter discusses five issues: research findings, theoretical issues, research methodology, policy implications and research implications. Firstly, research findings are discussed regarding research questions and the proposed model (Section 7.1). Secondly, the theoretical model (developed in Chapter 2) is revisited to discuss its application to the four cases considered (Section 7.2). Thirdly, reflections on research methodology are discussed regarding research design and data accessibility (Section 7.3). Fourthly, policy implications are presented to discuss the diversification and territorial justice (Section 7.4). Lastly, research implications are discussed with regards to directions for future research (Section 7.5).

### 7.1 Research findings

This section is organised in five subsections. Firstly, Section 7.1.1 answers each of the research questions listed in Chapter 1. Section 7.1.2 summarises the findings case by case. Section 7.1.3 analyses how each case could fit into the model of diversification proposed in Chapter 2. Section 7.1.4 discusses the findings in Thai contexts. Lastly, Section 7.1.5 argues for the theoretical contributions of this research.

#### 7.1.1 Answering Research Questions

First of all, in response to the first basic question (*what are the roles and relations of each policy actor in the delivery system at the provincial level?*), roles and relations could be clarified separately. Firstly, provincial actors were analysed regarding two administrative spheres (PSSS administration and project management) (see Section 5.1). In the PSSS administration (AC1), provincial actors can be categorised into six groups: the SSRO, governor, internal offices, HCPs, external offices, and representatives of employers and employees. It was expected that AC1 would play a role as an advisory board for provincial SIBD. However, most of them rarely, or sometimes only with great difficulty, managed to play their part for various reasons

(see Table 5.4). For government organisations, bureaucratic inertia and the claim on the SSRO's specialisation appear to be a reason. For employer and employee representatives, reasons are variably claimed e.g. the PSSS post is just for social prestige, the attempts to participate in SIBD decision-making are ignored. In the project management sphere (AC2), the SSRO is, no doubt, the one who starts a distinctive project which involves local organisations. These local organisations voluntarily joined (in Phrae) or are indirectly obliged to join (in Nan). At best, trust is built between them and the SSRO but, at worst, they just follow the contract with the SSRO and passively serve the recipients.

Secondly, inter-organisational relations in each province are unsurprisingly complex. These were analysed in two regards: relationship patterns and collaborative activities. Considering how they get involved in SIBD (voluntary or obligatory), relationship patterns were categorised into four types: contracting, cooperating, coordinating, and collaborating (see Section 5.3). Mostly, these relations were cooperative except the SSRO-local relation in Phrae and the SSRO-local and SSRO-external in Nan which were more collaborative in nature. These relations are part of the diversification of SIBD. To understand collaborative activities, this research used Agranoff and McGuire's five labels of activities: information seeking (IS), adjustment seeking (AS), policy and strategy making (PM), project based (PB), and resource exchange (RE). Most of activities are IS, PB, RE, and AS respectively (no PM activity was found). These activities suggest the degree of collaboration which can be sorted from highest to lowest as Nan, Phrae, Lamphun and Chiang Mai.

Regarding the second basic question (*to what extent does diversity of SIBD exist in Thailand's social insurance administration?*), it is evident that diversity of provincial SIBD exists across the four provinces – Chiang Mai, Lamphun, Phrae, Nan – in the North of Thailand (see Chapters 5 and 6). In short, the degree of diversification varies between provinces: Chiang Mai, low; Lamphun, Moderately low; Phrae, Moderately high; and, Nan, High. This reflects the SSRO's responsiveness in each province. In Phrae and Nan, the SSROs are relatively responsive and operate initiatives – Phrae's CLO, Nan's P&F – in SIBD. In contrast, evidence suggests that

Lamphun, with its participation in GCS, is slightly responsive to the governor who implemented his decentralised authorities. It should be noted that Chiang Mai, an important province to Thaksin's political power, appears to have a low degree of diversity. Evidence suggests that this is a result of not only the SSRO's unresponsiveness but also political pressures from *Chao Pho* in Chiang Mai whom are likely well-connected with Thaksin.

In response to the central question (*Is interprovincial diversity in SIBD caused by either or both a) the decentralisation policy in recent years or b) the relationship patterns between actors at provincial level?*), evidence firstly suggests that decentralisation is sometimes, if not always, positively associated with SIBD diversity. In Chiang Mai and Phrae, decentralisation is congruent with the degree of diversity. While Chiang Mai has low degrees of decentralisation and diversity; Phrae has high degrees in both aspects. However, the association between decentralisation and diversity in Lamphun and Nan is not positive. Lamphun has moderate degree of decentralisation and low degree of diversity. Participating in the governor's GCS project is a reason of the degree difference. In Nan, the decentralisation-diversity association is negative. With low degree of decentralisation, SIBD diversity is contrarily at high degree. While it is evident that none of key actors employed decentralised authorities, the P&F is highly diversified from national pattern of SIBD.

Further, this research finds that decentralisation is not the only factor responsible for the diversity in delivery of Social Insurance. The diversity is also impacted by inter-organisational collaborations within each province. In all four provinces, collaboration and diversity are positively associated. For instance, in Chiang Mai and Lamphun, the degrees of collaboration and diversity are similarly low. In Phrae and Nan, both degrees are differently at high level. Reinforcing the central argument of this research (see Chapter 2), although differently, both collaboration and decentralisation enables the SSRO to be responsive which results in the diversity of SIBD across the North of Thailand.



### 7.1.2 Descriptive summary of cases

To discuss the research findings, the four cases are categorised into either more or less diversified cases. Evidence suggests that, in Chiang Mai and Lamphun (less-diversified cases), SIBD remain standardized while in Phrae and Nan SIBD was more diversified from the national norms. Firstly, the less-diversified cases appear to generally provide standardized services. Particularly, Chiang Mai was found to rigidly follow the central guidelines as no initiative projects were found in the fieldwork. Lamphun was originally assumed to be operating an initiative project, Government Counter Service (GCS), but the project turned out to be the Lamphun governor's request rather than the SSRO's initiative. Therefore, Lamphun is eventually classified as another example of the standardized pattern.

In contrast, secondly, the case where delivery pattern were most diversified from the uniform norm were Phrae and Nan. In Phrae and Nan, the SSROs respond to local needs and originate initiative projects. The SSROs in both provinces operated the Cooperation with Local Organisations project (CLO; Phrae) and the Thinking Partners and Friends of Insured Persons project (P&F; Nan). Although these projects were designed in compliance with the SSO's policy of network building, the way the SSROs implemented the policy was distinctive in comparison to the national norms of SIBD and other SSROs' projects. Local organisations participating in the CLO and the P&F become additional service accesses for insured persons, whilst other SSROs mostly cooperated with local organisations as information-distributing centre.

In more detail, findings from each province can be discussed in four regards: provincial actors' roles and involvement in SIBD (Chapter 5), inter-organisational relations (Chapter 5), decentralisation in the province (Chapter 7) and SIBD pattern (Chapter 6). Firstly, compared to the other cases, Chiang Mai is the most standardized case of a provincial SIBD pattern. Although an attempt at initiative was found, it was terminated during the approval process. Decentralisation seems not to be implemented in SIBD. While actors appear to be rarely active, inter-organisational relations in the province are either contracting or cooperative. Considering data from fieldwork with Chiang Mai's political nature, it is unsurprising that initiative is not

prioritised and decentralisation is rarely implemented. With political pressures from provincial elites, bureaucrats would prefer the status quo to initiatives. Despite being relatively devolved, to implement decentralised authorities may mean taking a risk to challenge some *Chao Pho* or influential people.

Lamphun is an ambiguous case where responsiveness and initiative were seemingly conjoined. Although the GCS exists in Lamphun and is somewhat related to provincial SIBD, it is only a response to the governor's request not a self-initiating project. Nonetheless, the SSRO's participation in GCS slightly diversifies their pattern of SIBD from national standards. Decentralisation is not obviously implemented by the SSRO. However, the governor financially supported the SSRO to participate in the GCS using his decentralised budget. This leads to inter-organisational relations in Lamphun including contracting, cooperation, and coordination. Hugely different from Chiang Mai, political pressures are rarely found in Lamphun SIBD. For example, despite his connection with one of the then Ministers, an employee representative found it difficult to get his voice heard in SIBD decision-making.

Thirdly, Phrae is a case of highly-diversified pattern, notably the CLO project. To start this initiative, the SSRO appear to have used their decentralised authority and cooperated with autonomous local governments. However, the governor does not play a part in SIBD in this province. Similar to Chiang Mai and Lamphun, most actors were rarely active in SIBD. With regards to SSRO-local collaborative activity, this results in the coexistence of inter-organisational relations in the province: contracting, cooperation, and collaboration. Lastly, Nan is the most diversified case among selected provinces regarding their initiative project, the P&F. This is an outcome of the SSRO's decentralised decision-making and the SSRO-LAO collaboration. Like other provinces, most of actors are barely active in SIBD except the LAO (an external office appointed for their legal capacity to direct local governments in the province). Similar to Phrae, three inter-organisational relations – contracting, cooperation, collaboration – coexist in Nan.



Interestingly, although political pressures on SIBD are not evident, the employer representatives in Phrae and Nan are brothers from a wealthy family rooted in Phrae. They are not involved in any political parties but their family business won the governments' construction projects several times. This suggests they may have some connections with the governments. It is thus worth noting that *Chao Pho* (particularly in terms of their wealth) are involved in SIBD as one of the PSSS members in both provinces. Considering their capabilities (see McVey, 2000), they could execute their power in SIBD decision-making if they wish.

Revisiting discussions on political variables in the province (see particularly Section 2.2.5 and Chapter 3), it is evident that political elites do get involved in SIBD somehow. They either participated in the PSSS (e.g. *Chao Pho*) or indirectly chose the PSSS members (senior bureaucrats, national politicians). Regardless of this, however, it is arguable that none of them directly influenced or intervened in SIBD which subsequently generated the diversity. Also, as Bowie (2008) suggests, the politically oppressed in the North are likely to resist their patrons. However, in this research, no evidence was found to reassert this argument. In the four cases, even the involvement of the oppressed (employees) is hardly found. Let alone their resistance. Thus, to conclude, political variables in the province do have impacts on SIBD but hardly in the way suggested in many theories.

Based on the earlier summary, the pattern of SIBD in Thailand can be summarised into a single diagram (see Figure 7.1). This can be explained in three regards. Firstly, similar to diagrams in earlier chapters, three administrative spheres are illustrated with different colours: PSSS is purple, project management is yellow and provincial administration is orange. The yellow zone is encircled with dashed line because it appears it is project management which diversifies SIBD and does not exist in all provinces. Secondly, arrows between each actor are drawn to illustrate the number of relationship patterns which exist between the two actors (e.g. two arrows equal two patterns). Its colour and style signify different meanings: black arrows for contracting pattern; black dashed for cooperation; black dotted for coordination; and, red arrow for collaboration. Lastly, each small white circle with a letter inside

represents a type of resource being exchanged between two actors. For example, the white circle with 'I, M, S1, S2' situated between local organisation and the SSRO means that, in the local-SSRO relationship, four types of resource (information, material, staff and service) are exchanged.

### 7.1.3 Putting cases into models

Table 7.1 illustrates how the proposed model of diversification (see Figure 2.1) can be applied to SIBD diversification in the four selected cases. The central argument proposed in Chapter 2 is proved to be true; decentralisation degree and diversification degree are positively associated. For instance, high diversity appears in the highly decentralised case (Phrae) and low diversity in the lowest decentralised case (Chiang Mai). However, there are cases where the diversification degree is not congruent with the decentralisation degree. For instance, despite exhibiting moderate and moderately low degrees of decentralisation respectively, Lamphun has low diversity and Nan has high diversity. Instead, what is congruent with the diversification degree in these cases is the degree of collaboration. Lamphun has moderately low degree of collaboration with low degree of diversification; Nan has high collaboration and high diversity.

Table 7.1 Putting cases into the proposed model of SIBD diversification

Case	Diversification pattern	Diversity degree	Collaboration degree	Decentralisation degree
Chiang Mai	Somewhat Weberian	Low	Low	Low
Lamphun	Weberian/ Customer-oriented	Low	Moderately Low	Moderate
Phrae	Somewhat Strategic	High	Moderately High	Moderately High
Nan	Somewhat Strategic	High	High	Moderately Low

The four cases do not fit perfectly into a single model. Each case is not exclusive to a particular model; rather, considering all of them together illustrates a continuum of diversification patterns. Firstly, starting from the case of Chiang Mai, the SSRO's diplomatic character enables this case to be flexible and opportunistic and, therefore,

somewhat Weberian. Secondly, Lamphun case comprises both Weberian and customer-oriented patterns since the SSRO seems to be conventional but sometimes respond to local request. Thirdly, Nan could fall into the strategic model as they have an initiative project (P&F) which is strategically managed. However, as the Nan SSRO is still ambiguously autocratic-participative in coordinating with other provincial actors and has a moderately low degree of decentralisation, it is arguably somewhat strategic. Lastly, at the end of the continuum, Phrae is the closest case to the strategic pattern of diversification. Their initiative project (CLO) is highly diversified from the uniform pattern. It is also a concrete evidence of moderately high degree of both collaboration and decentralisation.

#### **7.1.4 Social insurance performance in provincial Thailand**

In Thailand, it appears that social insurance institution at the provincial level has rarely been working as it is regulated (see Chapter 5 and Appendix 5). With an ideal role as a participative mechanism of SIBD, a tripartite board or the PSSS (AC1) barely performs its legally-bounded role. The PSSS is well-structured with three key stakeholders - government, employer, employee – appointed in the committee. However, its practice has been in a fused form (in Riggs' term). This undeniably reflects Riggs' model of prismatic society in which the structure is well-organised while the practice barely follow the structure. Evidence suggests that the PSSS members from government organisations are inert. Most of them claim the SSRO's specialisation as the reason not to be active, or intervene (*kao luang*), in SIBD. With political interventions from politicians and/or bureaucrats, employer and employee representatives are questionably involved in SIBD. Ideally, selected employers in the PSSS would act as employer representatives. However, this research finds that their participation in SIBD is trivial. Interestingly, all of them are those in wealth and power and likely *Chao Pho* in the province. Despite being appointed as the PSSS, it is unclear how they participate in SIBD.

Likewise, an employee representative is supposed to stand up for employees but that is not the case for Thai SIBD. Some employee representatives are nominated by a senior bureaucrat and some are selected because, as the SSRO claims, they could

‘work with’ the SSRO. Implicitly, these circumstances reflect patronage system in Thailand in which reciprocal relationship between superior and inferior are essential. An employee gets a relatively prestige social status (a member of government committee) and become compliant with the SSRO, or his/her patron, in return. Evidently, these representatives are mostly quiet in the PSSS meetings. They seem to be there just to agree with whatever comes up in the meeting. In an interesting case, one of the employee representatives is not officially employed in any organisations and thus cannot be a PSSS member. However, he is still recommended by a senior bureaucrat and appointed in the PSSS. No evidence shows how he is actively involved in SIBD.

The SSRO, under these tense circumstances, is mostly driving SIBD on their own. The PSSS appears to be a rubber stamp for their decision-making. Adding up the politics of selection and appointment of representatives, the PSSS is questionably a supporting method of SIBD. Further, with *Chao Pho* involved, even a routine operation of SIBD could be difficult. For instance, SIBD requires a contribution payment from both employers and employees. In Chiang Mai, however, the SSRO finds difficulty in or reluctantly imposes contribution collection on the employer with strong political power. He was once a committee member of Thaksin’s political party. Additionally, even the deputy governor implicitly suggested that to work in Chiang Mai compromise was preferred over confrontation. In this sense, compromise implies negotiations between provincial elites, not the government and its citizens.

To avoid such political tensions, the SSRO initiates another actor constellation – project management (AC2) which involves local organisations e.g. local governments, community hospitals, sub-district heads. This AC2 is more manageable for the SSRO as it is basically service improvement at the local level. It involves only the SSRO, the SSO, and other selected-by-SSRO organisations. The SSO provides financial support and legitimisation of the project. Selected organisations are contracted under the MoU. This seemingly simplified pattern has, however, its own problems. On one hand, local governments involved in SIBD as hierarchically subordinate to the SSRO instead of working as cooperating partners. They evidently

work under the SSRO's order, or request for cooperation. On the other hand, the SSO unsurprisingly attempts to retain central control over local discretion. It is difficult, for the SSROs, to get the SSO's financial support for the continuation of their initiatives. Thus, what crucial to SIBD diversification is in fact the personality, and perhaps the policy, of the SSRO chief. In Phrae and Nan, for example, the SSRO chiefs actively design their initiatives which diversifies SIBD pattern in the provinces.

Last but not least, it is fair to say that social insurance institutions have rarely been affected by Thai political uncertainties. This research finds that Thailand's political instabilities do have impact on the institutions in terms of freezing, not reshaping, policy development. As argued earlier, SIBD seems to be out of concern for those in power and wealth. Considering approximately nine millions insured persons with a total 67-million population, they are somewhat of a minority in the nation. Those who long for popularity to win over general elections may simply overlook at their votes. Also, historically, the working class has long been ignored in Thailand since 1970s (see Baker and Phongpaichit, 2009; Schramm, 2001). Emphasising economic development, the government usually designs policies in favour of investors or employers. Work welfare policy is provided only to meet international standards. SIBs in Thailand cover all aspects suggested by the ILO. Currently, the most progressive move in Thai social insurance is coverage extension to informal labours. These are driven not by politicians but by technocrats in the Thai bureaucracy. Even Thaksin and his governments paid little attention to social insurance policy during his tenure. Consequently, SIBD remains out of interest to those at the top of political pyramid. It is less-developed than benefit entitlements.

### **7.1.5 Theoretical contributions**

It is expected that this research could provide at least four theoretical contributions including one for each theoretical perspective in Chapter 2 (i.e. social insurance, decentralisation, collaborative public management, inter-organisational relations). Firstly, as SIA is believed to be standardized and centralised, this research finds that Thailand could exemplify the case where the administration is diversified and



decentralised (see Chapter 5). Secondly, as several studies on decentralisation within the welfare state suggest that diversity tends to be increasing as a result of decentralisation, this research in contrast emphasises that not only decentralisation but also collaboration are factors which explain diversity (see Chapter 6). Thirdly, as degree of collaboration is rarely discussed in collaborative public management studies, this research proposes that it could be determined in the combination of two components; relationship patterns and collaborative activities (see Chapter 5).

## **7.2 Revisiting the proposed model of diversification**

Theoretical models and reality rarely match perfectly. While Section 7.1 shows the relationship between the original theoretical model and the data collected during this study, it is clear that the two do not map together well in some cases. Therefore, this section discusses limitations which might explain the disjuncture between the model and the data.

### **7.2.1 Reflections on Agranoff and McGuire's model**

Agranoff and McGuire's model is a good start when undertaking research on collaborative public management. Indeed, plenty of analytical frameworks based on Agranoff and McGuire's work (2003) are already present in the literature, reflecting how it is seen as a strong descriptive study of relevant networks (Provan & Kenis, 2008). However, this research develops its analytical framework from this model not only because it is an 'extensive discussion of the dilemma of managing public networks (Provan & Kenis, 2008, p. 246)' and a study which 'proclaimed the importance of networks for the formulation and implementation of public policy (O'Toole & Meier, 2004, p. 682)' but also because of the breadth and depth of analysis provided by this model. Firstly, Agranoff and McGuire propose two dimensions (collaborative activity and collaborative strategy) which sufficiently cover two levels of collaboration analysis, suggested by (Sullivan, Williams, & Jeffares, 2012), including macro (collaboration pattern) and micro (collaborative management). Secondly, their model also provides a tool for analysing collaboration

in details (e.g. classifying 20 activity types) which is employed as a starting point for building up an understanding of inter-organisational collaboration in this research.

Nonetheless, this research is different from Agranoff and McGuire's work in at least two regards. Firstly, although this research employed their collaborative activity labels, it sees the collaborative activities differently. For instance, five types of collaborative activities can be divided into either a vertical or a horizontal direction. However, each activity type is not restricted to a particular direction as, for example, information seeking (IS) can happen horizontally and project-based activity (PB) can happens vertically too. In other words, it looks at collaborative activities from non-linear rather than linear perspective. A second major difference concerns how applying their model to a delivery agency which is not local government requires a revision of the analytical framework. As the SSRO is not a local government, they do not have authority to design other provincial policies beyond SIBD. They are under the matrix organisational structure where two superordinates (the SSO, the governor) have legitimacy to control them. In other words, they have autonomy for provincial SIBD policy-making but not for provincial policy-making in general. With such differences, this research developed several analytical frameworks to understand the selected case studies. For instance, Chapter 6 discusses collaboration in mutual-agreement rather than from a hierarchical viewpoint. It also proposes 81 possible resource-exchange patterns as an analytical framework in order to understand the actor's influence on the SSRO.

### **7.2.2 Reflections on Riggs' prismatic model**

Having Thailand as a case study, Riggs' model is essential to understanding its society and politics. The question being posted since the beginning of this dissertation is whether this model is still applicable to Thailand. Some said it had been dead; others said it is still alive. This research agrees with the latter and argues that despite the ever changing contexts Thailand is still a bureaucratic polity and prismatic society. Firstly, Riggs' concept of bureaucratic polity can still explain Thai contemporary politics to a certain extent. Indeed, Thailand has been progressing on democratisation. Bureaucrats would have become less involved, or powerful, in

politics. However, they remain influential in Thai contemporary politics. The recent coups and Thaksin's intervention in Thai bureaucracy are prominent examples. Secondly, within the context of prismatic society, Thai bureaucracy still reflects the fused service pattern with seemingly well-organised structure. For example, Thailand's SIBD exemplifies how modern structure of tri-partite committee is designed and works in prismatic contexts. Despite being well-structured following international guidelines and experiences, SIBD practices are many times different from what could be expected.

It should be noted, however, that Riggs' model helps explain Thai socio-political contexts mostly at the national level. At the provincial level, this research finds it difficult to apply Riggs' theory in explaining bureaucratic practices and provincial politics. Literature on Thai bureaucracy (see Section 6.1.3) and emerging political elites (see Section 6.1.2) are thus reviewed to explain Thailand's SIBD further. In other words, Riggs' model of bureaucratic polity is limited to a political game between bureaucrats and political elites at the national level while this research seeks for an explanation at the provincial level. Thus, it is fair to say that this research goes deeper into the sub-national level of bureaucratic polity. It clarifies how things work at the provincial level rather than national level.

## **7.3 Reflections on research methodology**

### **7.3.1 Revisiting research design**

As discussed in Section 4.2.4, the design of this research has both strengths and weaknesses. This section revisits them in two regards: being case-study research and being qualitative research. The employing of a case study based approach can give rise to concerns around generalizability and bias. As Yin (1994) suggests, 'the greatest concern [of case study research] has been over the lack of rigor of case study research [p.9]'. However, Yin himself argues that '[W]hat is often forgotten is that bias also can enter into the conduct of experiments ... and the use of other research strategies (p.10)'. Being aware of bias, this research is designed and carried out to minimise bias using data triangulation. For the question of generalizability, Yin also

suggests that ‘case studies, like experiments, are generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes. ... [it] does not represent a "sample," and the investigator's goal is to expand and generalize theories (analytic generalization) and not to enumerate frequencies (statistical generalization) (p.10)’. Employing case study strategy, this research aims to propose a theoretical model of SIA. As discussed through this dissertation, Thailand is selected as an example of how the model could be applied to the real world. It should be remembered that this research does not represent Thailand as a sample of a wider context.

Being qualitative research, this research may contain classic weaknesses of qualitative research, compiled by Bryman (2008), including: subjectivity, difficultly replicated, generalisation problem, and a lack of transparency. For example, the indication of the degrees of diversity, decentralisation and collaboration may seem subjected to the researcher’s interpretation. However, coding analysis is employed to generate evidence from a tremendous amount of data. It attempts to minimise subjectivity in this research. Also, it should be emphasised that this research aims to understand the diversity from the actor’s perspective and qualitative methodology is useful for this purpose. According to Bryman (2008, pp. 385-390), five strengths of a qualitative research strategy includes: seeing through the eyes of the people being studied, description and the emphasis on context, emphasis on process, flexibility and limited structure, and concepts and theory grounded in data. Chapter 5, for example, discussed provincial actors’ opinions on the PSSS role in SIBD. It provides an insight from most of actors who participated in the PSSS in reality.

### **7.3.2 Revisiting limitations of data accessibility**

Besides the weaknesses discussed above, limitations of data accessibility are of concern in two regards. Firstly, before the fieldwork, it was of concern that it might prove difficult to access all the relevant actors and documents needed for this study. Indeed, this was the case, and alternative interviewees and data resources had to be identified as the research progressed. However, as seen in the analysis presented, insufficient data remains in several parts. Therefore, it should be reiterated here that this research is not trying to make a conclusion out of such insufficiency. Instead, the

research findings are the researcher's attempt to conclude only when the data appear sufficiently strong.

Secondly, two concerns over getting the right person to be interviewed should be noted. First, government officials, or bureaucrats, are frequently relocated from one place to the other. Particularly, those working as chiefs of the office are often relocated by central order. This may limit the strength of the data as some interviewees had just arrived in post not long before taking part in the study. One example is the Chiang Mai SSRO chief who had arrived just a few months before the interview and so appeared less able to give in-depth responses on detailed aspects of the policy. However, as the Lamphun SSRO chief was the Chiang Mai SSRO chief before moving to Lamphun, he was able to not only comment on his earlier work but also draw comparisons between the two regions. Second, some office chiefs appointed other staffs to give an interview or called some staffs in to join in the interviews. This sometimes makes the interview difficult as the interview questions needed to be re-adjusted to try to solicit information from those present.

## **7.4 Policy Implications**

As discussed earlier, there are geographical differences of service provision across the four selected provinces. Thus, the question related to territorial justice arises. Put simply, the Thai government has long designed service delivery on the basis of centralisation. The SSO is responsible for national policy and the SSRO is responsible for provincial services. In principle, territorial justice – accessibility of public services should be equalised across nation (Kay, 2005) – is of concern. Benefits are equally entitled to insured persons across the nation. Also, as the government would assume, service access (the SSRO office) is equally accessible across Thailand on the basis of one office for each territory (province). Exceptionally, more than one office could be established in a highly populous province like the metropolitan Bangkok with its 12 SSRO offices. This in general complies with the concept of territorial justice concerning 'allocation of resources between areal administrative units (R. Walker & Lawton, 1988)' and 'to each area according to the needs of the population of that area (Davies, 1968)'. In short, it

concerns the positive correlation between need and provision (Davies, 1968; Kay, 2005; Powell, 1992).

However, as Boyne and Powell (1991, pp. 264-265) state, '[T]he achievement of perfect territorial justice is not a panacea for problems of resource distribution'. They suggest four remaining problems: ecological fallacy, trade-off between justice and local autonomy, trade-off between efficiency and equity, and non-guaranteed equality of well-being. The first two problems are reflected in this research. Firstly, in Thailand, although there is at least one SSRO office in every single province, its location is mostly in the city centre (*Muang*). This overlooks the fact that insured persons are scattered in all districts of the province. Complying with ecological fallacy, this 'inter-area equity' is hiding 'intra-area inequity' (Boyne & Powell, 1991, p. 264). While SIBD is easy to access for those residing in *Muang* district, those in other districts need to travel in various distances to the SSRO office. In other words, '[W]hat looks like equality on one dimension may appear to be inequality on another' (Boyne et al., 2001, p. 21).

Secondly, national norms are emphasised in Thailand's SIBD but, in Phrae and Nan, service users are receiving an extra service provided in cooperation between the SSRO and local organisations. This reflects Boyne and Powell's note that 'local discretion to respond to need conflicts with the objective of clients with similar needs receiving similar services regardless of where they live' (p.244). However, as Kay (2005, p. 547) suggests, 'equalising the capacity for territorial justice are much more questionable when policy competencies are asymmetric among sub-central units, where their sizes are not uniform and where particular social and economic needs are territorially concentrated'. This research finds that, considering the distribution of insured persons across districts, the Phrae and Nan SSROs' initiatives are enhancing geographical equality of SIBD access. Also, considering Thammasat University's study, service users in the two provinces are satisfied the most. It highlights local needs involving more accessible service access in remote areas of the province, engages local organisations in SIBD and gives greater autonomy to SIBD local agency (the SSRO). It thus deserves a wider implementation across the nation.

Indeed, this localisation of SIBD may involve the trade-off between local autonomy and territorial justice (Judge, 1975). However, although local autonomy may come with territorial inequality, the question to be answered is whether Thailand focuses on actual or potential outcomes. As Heald (1983, p. 240) distinguishes, '[I]f the focus is upon actual outcomes, territorial equity requires that there are actually equal standards of provision in all areas. If, however, the focus is on potential outcomes, territorial equity requires that there might be equal standards of provision . . . local choices determine whether standards are, in fact, equal'. To answer this question, this research agrees with Boyne et al. (2001, pp. 32-33) as they stress, 'centralization is necessary but not sufficient condition for equity. Centralization is necessary because in the absence of national controls, local agencies are likely to react in different ways to similar circumstances; but centralization is insufficient because a national government may ignore issues of equity when allocating resources'. Thus, although localisation of SIBD is suggested on the narrow basis of need (closer access to insured persons in remote areas), SIBD still requires concern not only territorial equity but also equality of service access which could be achieved by the localisation.

## **7.5 Directions for future research**

Future research could take an alternative approach to understand multi-level governance from that of this study. This research is based on a set of particular theoretical and epistemological approaches (see Chapter 2). For example, this research agrees with Huxham (1996) that collaboration is 'magnified complications' of organisations working together. Undertaking this research can only look at some aspects of this. It takes the approach that collaboration is good as it could help tailor public service delivery pattern. However, future research may re-examine positive impact of collaboration on public service delivery. Is it overestimated or underestimated? Does it have negative, as well as positive, impacts on delivery?

Also, employing qualitative methodology, this research has not been able to attach actual quantitative values to the exchanges between actors and had to rely on their perceptions. Future research might find it is possible to quantify these aspects.

Alternatively, it could follow similar substantive interest but consider a wider range of theoretical and methodological approaches to multi-level governance. For example, the analysis of inter-organisational relations could be developed using statistic methods to re-examine the degree of collaboration in Chapter 6. Also, the case selection could be expanded to all 75 provinces in Thailand. Perhaps, consequently, robustness of data analysis would be increased. Ultimately, it would be interesting to see if research based on different theoretical or methodological underpinnings reaches the same conclusion.

## **Concluding remarks**

To understand SIBD in Thai contexts, this research re-examines the applicability of Riggs' theory in developing countries. His concept of bureaucratic polity can still explain Thai contemporary politics to a certain extent. In the 1990s, optimists once noticed that Thailand was progressing on democratisation. Bureaucrats would become less involved, or powerful, in Thai politics. Twenty years later, they remain key actors in the country's contemporary politics. The 2006 coup and Thaksin's attempts to diffuse bureaucratic powers are prominent examples. Also, explaining public service delivery in Thailand could lean on the prismatic model. In this research, Thailand's SIBD exemplifies how modern structure of tri-partite committee works in developing contexts. Despite being well-structured following international guidelines, its practices are many times not as expected.

Political variables are evidently related to SIBD in several ways. National politicians and senior bureaucrats intervene in the selection of PSSS members. They put their cliques (*Phak Phuak*) in these positions for various reasons. In three cases (Chiang Mai, Phrae, Nan), *Chao Pho* (emerging political and business elites in the province) are appointed as an employer representative yet their performance in this role are questionable. Particularly, in Chiang Mai, the *Chao Pho* has not paid for SI contributions for a while in spite of his being the PSSS member. Still, these are not direct impacts on SIBD diversity. Further, some may be sceptic on Thaksin's role in SIBD. It is apparent that, during his terms, Thaksin succeeded in adopting and



implementing many policies. However, except money matter in the SSF, he rarely paid attention to social insurance and SIBD. The only connection between SIBD and Thaksin found in this research is that the *Chao Pho* PSSS member in Chiang Mai was Thaksin's party member. Not only his money and power in the province but also connection with Thaksin should thus be taken into consideration. Possibly, these are the reasons why he managed to avoid contribution payments. Also, this example suggests that SIBD in Chiang Mai possibly remains in rigid form to keep status quo and avoid conflicts with provincial elites. However, to strengthen such conclusion, future research with a particular focus on politics of social insurance in Thailand should be conducted.

With respect to future research on social security administration, this research finds that despite national uniform pattern of delivery initiatives at the sub-national level are possible. In other words, there might be tensions between a uniform administration of social insurance rooted in traditional conceptions and a diverse pattern based on modern conceptions of good governance and new public management. However, initiatives could occur with regards to decentralisation and collaboration. This research exemplifies Thailand as the case in which traditional uniform administration runs up against innovative forms of governance based on initiative at the local level. Personalities of leading actors at the provincial level and the ability to introduce new patterns of delivery on a non-uniform basis are found to be the variables of diversification. Seemingly, the Thai system allows this in a way that most European systems would not. As a result of the late 1990s decentralisation, innovation of services at the provincial level has become relatively possible due to the strategic decision-making of leading actors and the flexibility in resource exchange. The SSRO could provide initiative services in cooperation with other provincial actors who could be alternative resource providers. For example, the Nan SSRO cooperated with the LAO and local government in the P&F project to provide additional services in remote areas.

Diversity of SIBD is arguably essential to policy outcomes and this research explains why that is the case. It has been undertaken to understand the mechanisms of social

insurance delivery in Thailand; how they vary; and, what impact this has on policy making and implementation. It has exemplified Thailand as a good example to reflect on these issues and study them in a way that is of a comparative value. This research thus suggests that people should not see diversity as a monolithic item.

Diversity has been seen as common issue in several disciplines. Sometimes it is overlooked and perceived as a context rather than an issue of study. This research argues that diversity should be taken as a central concern. Particularly, diversity of implementation matters to the outcome. Most of the possibilities of diversity in public service delivery come from modern idea of what government ought to be e.g. decentralised governance. In this example, diversity of implementation has affected perceptions within the system as well as outcomes. Therefore, it is necessary not to treat the system as a single object and rather look for differences in implementation between regions. This research has exemplified Thailand as a good example to reflect on these issues and study them in a way that it is of a comparative value.

## Appendices

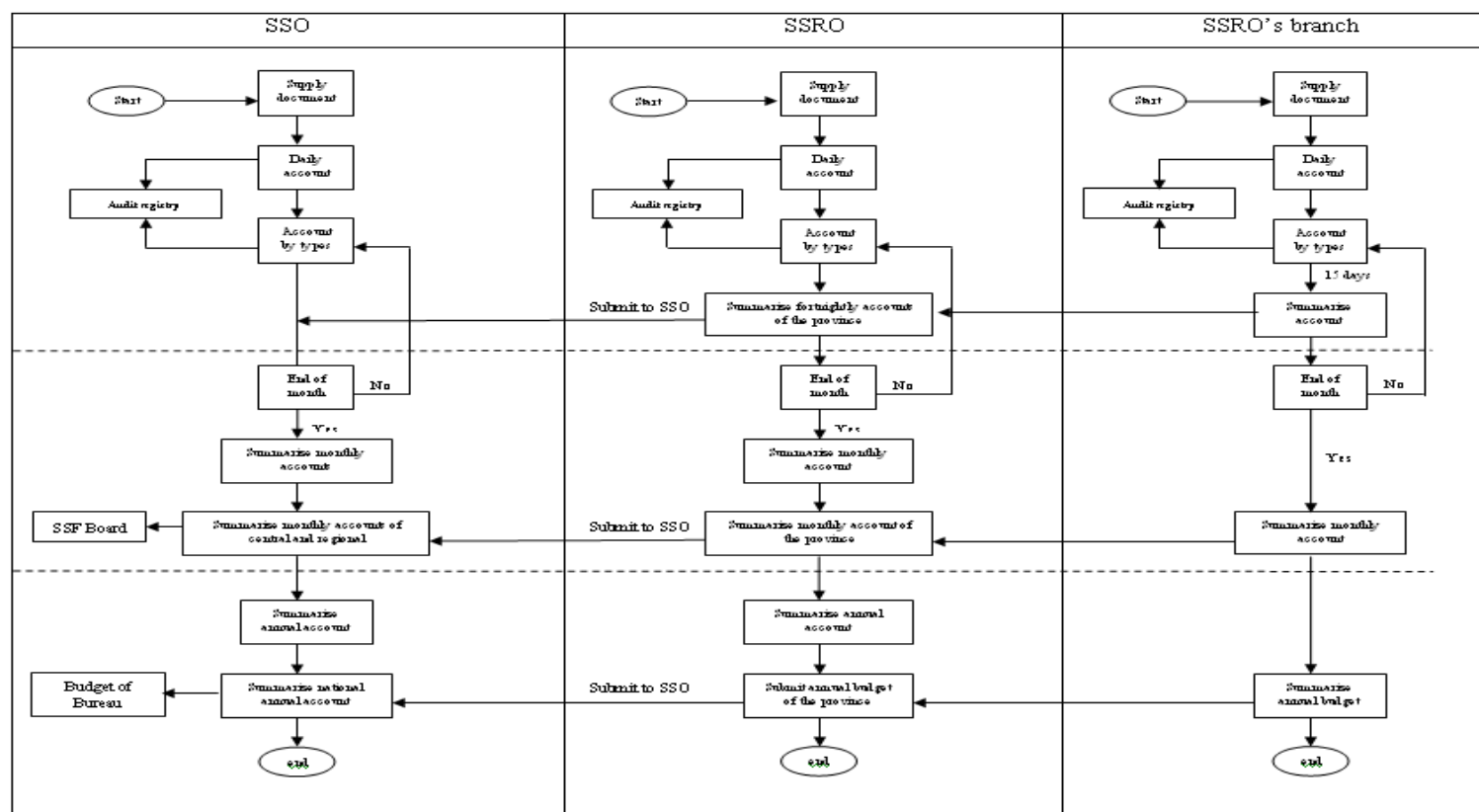
## Appendix 1: SIBs and administrative bodies in selected countries

Country	Types of SIB*							total No.	Administrative body	total No.	Decision maker	Delivery agency
	Si	U	P	D	M	F	Su					
Germany	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	7	1. Federal Insurance Institute 2. Federal Employment Agency 3. Federal German Pension Insurance 4. Federal Revenue Office	4	Tripartite board	Federal and local governments
France	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	7	1. National Union of Sickness Insurance Fund 2. National Old-Age Pension Insurance Fund 3. National Interoccupational Union for Employment in Industry and Commerce 4. National Family Allowances Fund	4	Tripartite/bipartite board	Federal and local governments
UK	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	7	1. NHS 2. Pension Service 3. Jobcentre Plus 4. Her Majesty's customs	4	Government department (Department of Work and Pension)	Executive agencies/ private partners
Sweden	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	7	1. Swedish Social Insurance Agency (SSIA) 2. Swedish Pensions Agency (SPA) 3. Swedish Unemployment Insurance Board (SUIB)	3	Government departments (SSIA, SPA, SUIB)	Local governments
Taiwan	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	7	1. Bureau of Labour Insurance (BLI) 2. Bureau of Health Insurance (BHI)	2	Government departments (BLI, BHI)	Field offices of the department (Local Offices Administration)
Thailand	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	7	1. Social Security Office (SSO)	1	Government department (SSO)	Field offices of the department (Social Security Regional Office: SSRO)

\*Si = Sickness, U = Unemployment, P = Pension, D = Disability, M = Maternity, F = Family benefit, Su = Survivor

Major data sources: International Social Security Association (ISSA), US's Social Security Administration (SSA)

## Appendix 2: Budget allocation process of Thailand's social insurance administration



Source: Adapted from Division of Finance and Accounting (1997, pp. 2-3)

### Appendix 3: Governor's authorities, before and after decentralisation

	Before*	After**
General authorities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Administration under laws and regulations</li> <li>2. Administration under assignments of the Cabinet, ministries, departments, or the Prime Minister.</li> <li>3. Administration under suggestions of ministerial auditors.</li> <li>4. Monitoring or, in case of legal violation, prohibiting actions of government officials in the province.</li> <li>5. Cooperating with government officials in development or disaster mitigation in the province.</li> <li>6. Proposing budget to related ministries and then reporting to the MoI.</li> <li>7. Monitoring local administration in the province.</li> <li>8. Monitoring operation of public organisations or enterprises.</li> <li>9. Recruit, employ, reward, and punish officials in the province.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduction of strategy and putting it into practice with good leadership. Focusing on problems at grass roots level and tackling by means of available tools while setting up guidelines to solve problems.</li> <li>2. Being Teak Leader for coordination for working in every part of the province, adhering to the strategy for development. Governor shall encourage team work while boosting morale with largesse to attain targets and support the efforts to tackle problems. At the same time, support shall be directed to bolster resources to be used in the development process.</li> <li>3. Create system to support local administration to become strong in the course of working for the people.</li> <li>4. Making the system of administration to be strong, efficient and reliable.</li> <li>5. Developing knowledge, capacity, potential for the workers.</li> </ol>
SIBD (SIBD)-related authorities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Enforcement and prosecution under the Cheque Fraud Act 1991</li> <li>2. Consideration and permission on insured person's application under Article 39, Social Security Act 1990</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Relocating SSRO officials</li> <li>2. Promoting SSRO officials</li> <li>3. Disciplinary proceedings</li> <li>4. Recruiting and selecting SSRO officials</li> <li>5. Acting on behalf of the SSRO chief</li> <li>6. Dismissal and expulsion determination</li> <li>7. Granting permission on applying for an official's examination</li> <li>8. Granting leave permission</li> <li>9. Approving leave with pay</li> <li>10. Approving business trip</li> </ol>

\*extracted from Dhamrongrachanupap Institute (2000), p.87-88 for general authorities, p.118 for SIBD-related authorities

\*\* extracted from: (1) for general authorities, Regulations of Prime Minister's Office Concerning Provincial Management, 2003, Clause 8, (2) for SIBD-related authorities, the SSO's and the Division of Promotion of Provincial Administration (DPPA)'s documents

## Appendix 4: Local government's authorities, before and after decentralisation

	Before	After
General*	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. transportation</li> <li>2. cleanliness</li> <li>3. epidemic prevention</li> <li>4. disaster mitigation</li> <li>5. education, art, and culture</li> <li>6. women, children, elderly, and disabled support</li> <li>7. environmental monitor</li> <li>8. local tradition, wisdom and culture preservation</li> <li>9. other duties assigned by the government</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. annual plan</li> <li>2. transportation</li> <li>3. land development</li> <li>4. infrastructure</li> <li>5. public assistance</li> <li>6. job training</li> <li>7. commercial and investment</li> <li>8. tourism</li> <li>9. education</li> <li>10. social assistance</li> <li>11. local art and culture</li> <li>12. residential management</li> <li>13. recreational management</li> <li>14. sport promotion</li> <li>15. democracy development</li> <li>16. citizen's participation promotion</li> <li>17. cleanliness</li> <li>18. recycle management</li> <li>19. public health</li> <li>20. crematory provision</li> <li>21. livestock</li> <li>22. slaughter control</li> <li>23. security</li> <li>24. forest and environmental management</li> <li>25. urban planning</li> <li>26. public transport</li> <li>27. public space monitor</li> <li>28. building regulation</li> <li>29. disaster mitigation</li> <li>30. domestic safety</li> <li>31. other missions in benefit of residents</li> </ol>
SIBD-related**	Women, children, elderly and disabled support	Social assistance and public health

\* for pre-decentralisation extracted from Sub-district Council and Sub-district Administrative Organisation Act, 1994, Part 3; for post-decentralisation summarised from the PPDA

\*\* author's analysis

## Appendix 5: SSRO's legislated authorities

Extracts	Source
<p>Article 20: Social Security Regional Office is authorised to and responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) operate services under social security law, workmen's compensation law, and other relevant laws</li> <li>(2) monitor, advise, and support operation of the SSRO's branch</li> <li>(3) report the monitoring and evaluation under policies, programmemes, and projects to the Labour Office</li> <li>(4) cooperate or support the performance of other organisations related to and being assigned.</li> </ul>	<p>Ministerial Regulation of the Ministry of Labour Concerning the Organisation of the Social Security Office, 2011</p>
<p>Article 18: Social Security Regional Office is authorised to and responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) perform and coordinate under policies, programmemes, and projects concerning duties and responsibilities of the SSO in the province</li> <li>(2) report the monitoring and evaluation under policies, programmemes, and projects to the Labour Office</li> <li>(3) cooperate or support the performance of other organisations related to and being assigned.</li> </ul>	<p>Ministerial Regulation of the Ministry of Labour Concerning the Organisation of the Social Security Office, 2009</p>
<p>Social Security Regional Office is authorised to and responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) perform and coordinate regarding duties and responsibilities of the office within the province</li> <li>(2) report the performance under policies, programmemes, and projects to the Labour Office</li> <li>(3) cooperate or support the performance of other organisations related to and being assigned.</li> </ul>	<p>Ministerial Regulation of the Ministry of Labour Concerning the Organisation of the Social Security Office, 2002</p>



## Appendix 6: Primary data analysis of provincial resource-dependence relations

Org. = Organisation

OT (Organisation Type): Pu = Public, Pr = Private;

RP (Relationship pattern): O = Obligatory, V = Voluntary, IO = Indirect Obligatory

(x) = the number of resource types being mandated/expected/exchanged

### 1. Chiang Mai

Actor	Org.	OT/ RP	Resource to SSRO			SSRO's return resources		
			Mandated	Expected	Actual	Mandated	Expected	Actual
Internal office	EO	Pu/O	(1) Info	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info
	LO	Pu/O	(1) Info	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info
	LWPO	Pu/O	(1) Info	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info
	LSDC	Pu/O	(1) Info	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info
Province head	GO	Pu/O	(2) Info Financial	(2) Info Financial	(0) None	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info
HCP	PHO	Pu/O	(1) Info	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info	n/a	(1) Info
	PH	Pu/O	(1) Info	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info
External office	University Hospital	Pu/V	(2) Info Expertise	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info
	Private Hospital	Pr/V	(2) Info Expertise	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info
Representative	EmE1	Pr/V	(1) Info	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info
	EmE2	Pr/V	(1) Info	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info
	EmR1	Pr/V	(1) Info	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info	n/a	(1) Info
	EmR2	Pr/V	(1) Info	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info
Local organization	None	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

## 2. Lamphun

Actor	Org.	OT/ RP	Resource to SSRO			SSRO's return resources		
			Mandated	Expected	Actual	Mandated	Expected	Actual
Internal office	EO	Pu/O	(1) Info	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info
	LO	Pu/O	(1) Info	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info	n/a	(1) Info
	LWPO	Pu/O	(1) Info	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info
	LSDC	Pu/O	(1) Info	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info
Province head	GO	Pu/O	(2) Info Financial	(2) Info Financial	(1) Financial	(2) Info Service	(1) Service	Info Service
HCP	PHO	Pu/O	(1) Info	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info
	PH	Pu/O	(1) Info	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info	(1) Info	(1) Info
External office	Private hospital	Pr/V	(2) Info Expertise	(1) Info	(1) Info	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info
Representative	EmE	Pr/V	(1) Info	(1) Info	(1) Info	(1) Info	(1) Info	(1) Info
	EmR	Pr/V	(1) Info	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info	n/a	(0) None
Local organization	None	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

## 3. Phrae

Actor	Org.	OT/ RP	Resource to SSRO			SSRO's return resources		
			Mandated	Expected	Actual	Mandated	Expected	Actual
Internal office	EO	Pu/O	(1) Info	(1) Info	(1) Info	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info
	LO	Pu/O	(1) Info	(1) Info	n/a	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info
	LWPO	Pu/O	(1) Info	(1) Info	n/a	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info
	LSDC	Pu/O	(1) Info	(1) Info	(1) Info	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info
Province head	GO	Pu/O	(2) Info Financial	(2) Info Financial	(1) Info	(1) Info	(1) Financial	(1) Info
HCP	PHO	Pu/O	(1) Info	(1) Info	(1) Info	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info
	PH	Pu/O	(1) Info	(1) Info	n/a	(1) Info	Info	(1) Info
External office	AO	Pu/V	(2) Info Expertise	(2) Info Expertise	(1) Info	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info
Representative	EmE	Pr/V	(1) Info	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info	n/a	(1) Info
	EmR	Pr/V	(1) Info	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info	n/a	(1) Info
Local organization	CLO participating org.	Pu/V	(2) Staff Service	(2) Staff Service	(3) Staff Service Info	(3) Info Material Service	(0) None	Info Material Service

## 4. Nan

Actor	Org.	OT/ RP	Resource to SSRO			SSRO's return resources		
			Mandated	Expected	Actual	Mandated	Expected	Actual
Internal office	EO	Pu/O	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info
	LO	Pu/O	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info
	LWPO	Pu/O	(1) Info	(0) None	(0) None	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info
	LSDC	Pu/O	(1) Info	(0) None	(0) None	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info
Province head	GO	Pu/O	(2) Info Finance	(0) None	(2) Info Authority	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info
HCP	PHO	Pu/O	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info
	PH	Pu/O	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info
External office	LAO	Pu/V	(3) Info Expertise Authority	(1) Authority	(1) Authority	(1) Info	(0) None	(1) Info
Representative	EmE	Pr/V	(1) Info	(0) None	n/a	(1) Info	n/a	(1) Info
	EmR	Pr/V	(1) Info	(0) None	n/a	(1) Info	n/a	(1) Info
Local organization	Local gov.	Pu/IO	(3) Staff Material Service	(3) Staff Material Service	(2) Staff Material	(3) Info Material Service	(0) None	(3) Info Material Service

## Appendix 7: Interviewee list and schedule

No.	Actor	Interviewee	interview date
<b>Phrae (PH)</b>			
1	PH SSRO	SSRO chief	4 February 2011
2	PH SSRO	SSRO front-office head	4 February 2011
3	PH SSRO	SSRO back-office head	4 February 2011
4	PH LO	LO chief	3 March 2011
5	PH EO	EO chief	1 March 2011
6	PH LWPO	LWPO chief	2 March 2011
7	PH LSDC	LSDC director	3 March 2011
8	PH Governor	Governor	8 March 2011
9	PH HCP	PHO chief	10 March 2011
10	PH External	AO deputy chief	10 March 2011
11	PH EmE	Employee	21 December 2011
12	PH Local	Baan Lao SAO officer	3 March 2011
13	PH Local	Mae Jua Municipality officer	3 March 2011
<b>Lamphun (LP)</b>			
14	LP SSRO	SSRO chief	22 February 2011
15	LP SSRO	SSRO back-office head	9 November 2011
16	LP EO	EO chief	9 March 2011
17	LP LWPO	LWPO chief	11 March 2011
18	LP LSDC	LSDC director	12 March 2011
19	LP Governor	Deputy governor	11 March 2011
20	LP HCP	PHO deputy chief	19 December 2011
21	LP HCP	Rep of PH director	6 October 2011
22	LP External	Hariphunchai Memorial Director	18 March 2011
23	LP Employee	Employee	24 February 2011
<b>Chiang Mai (CM)</b>			
24	CM SSRO	SSRO chief	3 October 2011
25	CM LO	LO chief	4 October 2011
26	CM EO	EO chief	4 October 2011
27	CM LWPO	LWPO chief	4 October 2011
28	CM LSDC	LSDC director	5 October 2011
29	CM Governor	Deputy governor	23 December 2011
30	CM HCP	PH deputy director	6 December 2011
31	CM Employee	Employee 2	26 December 2011
32	CM Employee	Employee 1	29 December 2011
33	CM Employer	Employer 2	23 December 2011
34	CM External	University Hospital deputy director	7 December 2011
35	CM External	McCormick Hospital director	6 December 2011

No.	Actor	Interviewee	interview date
<b>Nan (NN)</b>			
36	NN SSRO	SSRO chief	11 October 2011
37	NN SSRO	SSRO front-office head	1 December 2011
38	NN LO	LO chief	12 October 2011
39	NN EO	EO chief	11 October 2011
40	NN LWPO	LWPO chief	12 October 2011
41	NN LSDC	LSDC director	11 October 2011
42	NN Governor	Governor	13 October 2011
43	NN HCP	PHO chief	13 October 2011
44	NN HCP	Rep of PH director	12 October 2011
45	NN External	LAO chief	1 December 2011
46	NN Local	Pua Municipality officer	30 November 2011
<b>Bangkok</b>			
47	SSO	SSO Director-General	10 January 2012
48	SSO	SSO director of contribution division	10 January 2012

## Appendix 8: List of key documents and sources

No.	Title*	Source
<b>Chiang Mai</b>		
1	Chiang Mai PSSS Meeting Agenda on 24 December 2009	CM LSDC; CM EmE2
2	Chiang Mai PSSS Meeting Agenda on 3 May 2011	CM LSDC; CM EmE2
3	Chiang Mai PSSS Meeting Agenda on 3 October 2011	CM EmE2
4	Circulated Letter on Approving Minutes of Meeting (3 May 2011) Approval	CM EmE2
5	Ministry of Labour's Regulation on the SSF spending on Meeting Allowance	CM EmR2
6	Minutes of Chiang Mai PSSS Meeting on 3 October 2011	CM LSDC; CM EmE2
7	Roles of Employer Representative in the Chiang Mai PSSS	CM EmR2
8	Social Security Committee's Order No.71/2009 on Appointment of Chiang Mai PSSS	CM LSDC
<b>Lamphun</b>		
9	Authorities and Responsibilities of Provincial Subcommittee of Social Security	LP SSRO
10	Minutes of Lamphun PSSS Meeting on 22 November 2010	LP SSRO
11	Main Missions of the SSO and Social Insurance Benefits	LP LO
12	Social Security Board's Order No.82/2009 on Appointment of Lamphun PSSS	LP External; LP SSRO
13	Statistics of benefit utilization	LP SSRO
<b>Phrae</b>		
14	Action plan of Fiscal Year 2008 of the Phrae SSRO	PH SSRO
15	Budget Allocation Strategy of 2011 of the Phrae SSRO	PH SSRO
16	Northern News: Phrae SSRO awarded Best Practice on Learning and proactive organisation	online
17	Minutes of Phrae PSSS Meeting on 19 October 2010	PH SSRO
18	Phrae PSSS Meeting Agenda on 23 December 2010	PH SSRO
19	Phrae SSRO's Order No.5/2010 on Duty Assignment	PH SSRO
20	Phrae SSRO PR News No.12/2010 "SSRO: Learning and proactive organisation"	online
21	Programmeme and projects of Fiscal Year 2005, of the Phrae SSRO	PH SSRO
22	Social Security Board's Order No.75/2009 on Appointment of Phrae PSSS	PH SSRO
23	2010 Provincial Strategy of the Phrae SSRO	PH SSRO
24	2010 Annual performance of the Phrae SSRO	PH SSRO
<b>Nan</b>		
25	List of Programmemes and Projects from year of establishment until 2010	NN SSRO
26	Memorandum of Understanding on Reciprocal Organisations	NN SSRO
27	Minutes of Nan PSSS Meeting on 27 December 2006	NN SSRO

<b>No.</b>	<b>Title*</b>	<b>Source</b>
28	Minutes of Nan PSSS Meeting on 6 December 2007	NN SSRO
29	Minutes of Nan PSSS Meeting on 23 August 2007	NN SSRO
30	Minutes of Nan PSSS Meeting on 30 October 2007	NN SSRO
31	Minutes of Nan PSSS Meeting on 26 November 2008	NN SSRO
32	Minutes of Nan PSSS Meeting on 26 March 2009	NN SSRO
33	Minutes of Nan PSSS Meeting on 18 September 2009	NN SSRO
34	Minutes of Nan PSSS Meeting on 17 November 2009	NN SSRO
35	Minutes of Nan PSSS Meeting on 26 June 2010	NN SSRO
36	Minutes of Nan PSSS Meeting on 28 June 2010	NN SSRO
37	Minutes of Nan PSSS Meeting on 4 April 2011	NN SSRO
38	Minutes of Nan PSSS Meeting on 12 May 2011	NN SSRO
39	Namelist of Nan PSSS (the 9th Commissioned) [endorsed on 5 May 2006]	NN SSRO
40	Nan Governor's Office's Order No.1970/2010 on Assignment of Coordinator with Local Governments	NN SSRO
41	Nan Governor's Office's Announcement on Social Insurance Coordinators	NN SSRO
42	Nan SSRO's Annual Performance Plan of Fiscal Year 2011	NN SSRO
43	Number of Insured Persons by district, Nan province	NN SSRO
44	Project of Friends and Partners of Insured Persons	NN SSRO
45	Social Security Board's Order No.02/2006 on Appointment of Nan PSSS [with practical guideline]	NN SSRO
46	Table of Satisfactory of service recipients of the MoL, Nan province	NN LO
Bangkok		
47	Ministerial Regulation on Organisation of Social Security Office 2002	online
48	Ministerial Regulation on Organisation of Social Security Office 2009	online
49	Ministerial Regulation on Organisation of Social Security Office 2011	Division of Administrative Development, SSO
50	Number of Insured Persons by District, 2011	SSO
51	Survey on Problems and Obstructions in Operation of Social Security Officials	MoL research database

\* All document titles are in Thai and translated into English by the author

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- B+%"3B%E0%B8%A0%E0%B8%B9%E0%B9%80%E0%B8%81%E0%B9%87%E0%B8%95%"3B+%"E0%B9%84%E0%B8%82%E0%B9%88%E0%B8%A1%E0%B8%B8%E0%B8%81%E0%B8%AA%E0%B8%B8%E0%B8%82%E0%B8%A0%E0%B8%B2%E0%B8%9E
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